

THE STUDENT WORLD

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PHILIPPE MAURY, *Editor*

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Students and Sex

A little more than three years ago, a number of *The Student World* was published under the title "Man and Woman". In it, a number of points of view were expressed, setting out a Christian approach to sex, marriage and the family. The great demand for this number, several sharp criticisms of some of its contents (notably what was said, by inference, about the "incompleteness" of the unmarried person) and repeated requests from those taking part in the discussion of the Federation's concern for pastoral care, have convinced us that there is need for another number of *The Student World* along similar lines, though with some significant differences.

The most fundamental of these lies in the fact that we are trying, here, to address ourselves in the main to those students who are in what might be called an "experimental" stage of their sexual relationships, who may not yet have decided whether, or whom, to marry, but are anxious to include every part of their lives in their obedience to Jesus Christ. It is just at this particular stage of our development that it is often most difficult, not only to *do*, but even to *see*, what is right. At this point students often find themselves at the loneliest point of their Christian pilgrimage. They are caught up in a complex of pressures, through which they have somehow to find their way: first, the clamant demands of their own instincts and desires, and the excitement of a new dimension of personal existence

opening up before them ; then, the sanctions of society and tradition, the advice and attitudes of their families, and the theories of their friends, which are probably in conflict with one another ; and, finally, the desire to find the way Christ is leading them through the varying demands of circumstances.

Precisely at this last point the S.C.M. and the Church often seem to fall down. Sometimes students' problems can never reach the surface, to be frankly faced and discussed, because the subject is thought — or felt — to be unfitting in a Christian environment. On other occasions, the fellowship of the S.C.M. is somehow "desexed". Two students from different parts of the world told me recently that the very success with which men and women managed to work together unselfconsciously in their S.C.M.s had given them a sort of sexless ideal of man-woman relationship. Finding a way out of this attitude at a later stage had been intensely difficult for them. This is one example of the attempt to set into a uniform pattern an area of life where, by the grace of God, there should be a healthy variety. And in both Church and S.C.M. there seems to be difficulty in facing students' sex problems, whatever their nature, in a theological frame of mind.

No one reading this issue of *The Student World* is likely to emerge with a well-articulated system of standards for sexual conduct. The series of articles from various parts of the world show how God's call to us in our sexual lives may vary in its detail, depending on the sort of situation in which our Christian witness has to be made. The articles on singleness, celibacy, marriage and homosexuality show how, even within one given situation, our Christian obedience in matters of sex may take different forms. But, at the same time, we hope that there is much that will speak to us all as we attempt, each in his or her own place, to allow the light of Christ to penetrate into every corner of our lives, and to think our way through the problems posed by the sexual nature which is His gift to us.

LEILA GILES.

Sexual Life and Life in Christ

MICHAEL FISCHER, S.S.F.

Four troubled people

John is in his second year as a medical student. He came up to one of the ancient English universities from an English public school. He is well within the tradition — pleasant, friendly, good at games, gets on well with people, has a sense of humour and a capacity to enjoy himself, as well as a growing sense of responsibility and some indications of leadership. His religion began as conventional Church of England encouraged by his family, who always do the right thing in a quiet way, and by the school chapel and chaplain. He was prepared for confirmation at the usual time, with about the usual amount of preparation. His faith received a rather violent impetus at a camp he was taken to by a school friend, run by Evangelicals who clearly took their religion a great deal more seriously than he had ever supposed people could! The result was, for him, a new and very real experience of God, interpreted, perhaps too readily, by the camp leader as a "conversion". Nevertheless it changed his views about a lot of things, and made him think again about his vocation. When he got to the university he found himself questioning a number of the ideas he had easily accepted at school, and in the end he threw in his lot with the S.C.M. and is now its college representative and puts a great deal of enthusiasm into it.

All rather ordinary — there are lots like John. And John is in trouble.

It all began one evening when a whole crowd went out together, and in the crowd was Jill, training as a nurse at the local hospital. After that they met a number of times at different things, and sometimes she came to have tea with him in his rooms. They were not in love, but they liked each other's company and found it exciting. And then one evening Jill stayed later than she usually did, and they both knew it, and knew that she should go — but she didn't — or, as he said afterwards, "Somehow I couldn't tell her to go, although I knew I

ought to." And so they kissed and made love to each other, and, just unable to stop themselves, went very much further than they meant to in physical contact. And now — now John says, "It all seems so sordid — but I think it might happen again. We neither of us felt happy about it. And how can I call myself a Christian and do such things..."

And then there is Peter.

He came from a different background, he joined the Inter-Varsity Fellowship when he came up, is reading history and plays different games, but otherwise he is very much like John and typical of the sort of people we see about the university. But his trouble appears rather different. He shares a room with a chap called Alan, an arrangement which was made by the college, and they had never met before. Fortunately they liked each other from the start and seemed to have a lot in common — which made sharing tolerable!

And now Peter says, "We began as ordinary friends, and so far as Alan is concerned that is what we are now. But it's not the same with me. I suppose it sounds absolutely mad and perverted, and I have never dared say it or hardly think it before, but the truth is that I am always feeling for him in the way that I ought to feel for a girl, in fact, I think I am in love with him, and I can't think of anything else. I suppose you will say that I am homosexual. I've always hated that word. At school this sort of thing happened between a lot of people and it wasn't thought much about; in any case it seemed different there. My real friendships have always been with my own sex rather than the opposite sex, and now this has happened. I don't think I will ever change. How can I call myself a Christian and be like this?"

Anne is a lovely girl in her last year reading English. She is very much in love with a theological student, who is very much in love with her — and everyone is happy about it. They plan to get engaged after his finals, which lie some way ahead. The question of sexual intercourse before marriage had come up. For her the problem was quite simply: "Why must we wait until we are married? I know that is the orthodox Christian view. But we shall have to wait so long — and I don't think

we can. We've talked it all over so many times. Some of my friends in college say it's foolish to have such scruples about it — of course they are not Christians, but they are very nice people just the same. Bill is stronger about it than I am, and I hate myself for making it difficult for him. We've tried to pray together about it — but it's not very easy somehow. How can I call myself a Christian and go on like this?"

And Jim. He is a theological student too. His trouble is one that afflicts nearly everyone at some time or another — but he is still inclined to think he is the only one. "Really it started at school; quite a lot of chaps did it, and there were all the usual jokes and stories. A doctor came and gave us a talk once, and said we would all grow out of masturbation, but somehow I don't seem to have done so. It makes me feel absolutely beastly, and I've said dozens of times that I will never do it again, but somehow I just haven't the will power. I've prayed about it, but that doesn't seem to help — at any rate not for long. I feel it's a mockery to go on going to church and making my communion when I can't overcome a childish habit like this. How can I go on calling myself a Christian?..."

And then there is Tom, and Jane, and Tony, and Betty and William... Can it really be the same person who acts in this way sometimes, and at the same time is regarded as a Christian, going to church, organizing the S.C.M. or the I.V.F. — and really believing that God has called him to do it?

God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself

"Since God became man there is nothing human that cannot be made holy."

I believe that statement can be made good for the very human situations in which each of the above find themselves. They are all imaginary people, yet they represent countless Christian students who find themselves with similar problems. It was put to me once, "Can sex be made as fully a part of my life as a Christian as any other part of it? Sexual sins seem so much more deadly than any other sins (and even the Prayer Book Litany picks out fornication specially, as if it were worse

than the rest !) — and yet it *is* the most human part of me, or so it seems.”

I think there are certain things we must keep in mind when we are looking for an answer to these problems. First of all, that there is a major war going on all the time in the world, a war which is waged in the lives of each one of us who call ourselves Christians and are members of Christ's Body, the Church. It is a war between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world. The outcome is certain, and victory has been assured us by the total victory of Jesus Christ on the Cross, but the fight goes on, in each one of us who have been incorporated into His Body. The victory for us, too, is assured, provided we fight in Him, and by His strength. To be a citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven — and after all that is what you are — means that you must accept the standards of the Kingdom, which are the standards of Christ, and be judged by them. This is something the world will never understand at all. The world creates its own standards, and in many instances they are not too bad, but they make it possible for your friends to say, “Other people do it, so why shouldn't I?”, which is to judge yourself by others. Or, “I like it, and I don't see anything wrong in it”, which is to create your own standard — or even to accept the general assumption that you can do a lot of things as long as you are not caught, which when it happens is “hard luck”!

A great deal of confusion comes from the fact that though we are Christians we find it only too easy to compromise with the world, indeed, often we are hardly aware that we are doing so and to what extent, until our conscience pulls us up with a jolt and we know that we have gone too far, and then it is sometimes too late.

All this the devil finds a very useful situation — and one with endless opportunities for temptation. For instance, the world, with its knowledge that this is a subject which all men and women find endlessly interesting, preys upon this interest, and uses sex appeal to buy and sell almost everything. It screams at you from the billboards, shouts from the films, is crooned from the radio, and is the chief selling power of picture papers and magazines with huge circulations. Since the res-

traints of our grandparents' days have gone, there is nothing to stop them "giving the public what they want" — and this is undoubtedly what a lot of the public *do* want — but you need hardly wonder if such a mass of suggestion does not sometimes invade your mind and leave you wondering with the world, "Well, why not?" In the past, by a conspiracy of silence, such things were not talked about — at any rate things are better in that respect now, and as we can do so, the beginning of the victory depends on us facing quite frankly the nature and power of the enemy.

Temptation is not sin

You are bound to be tempted, again and again, but that is not sin. It is sometimes very fierce and difficult to resist, but it can only become sin when we cease to do that.

Christians don't consider sufficiently the place of temptation in their lives (though they say countless times, "Lead us not into temptation"). It is, in fact, in times of temptation that we are brought very close to our Lord Himself. "Since God became man there is nothing human that cannot be made holy" — and our growth in holiness has much to do with the way we tackle this question. The sin lies sometimes in the fact that we *allow* ourselves to be tempted. If we have considered our life at all, we know perfectly well that there are some situations which will lead us into temptation, and it is sheer hypocrisy to pray that we won't be tempted, if we are making no effort to see that it doesn't happen.

If a boy is alone with a girl under the "right" set of circumstances — the dance, the drinks, the band, the night, the "intoxication of proximity", then the chances are that that may be tempted to throw caution to the wind at some point or another. If they have recognized this fact beforehand, and in a cooler moment accepted their limitations and weaknesses, then they won't allow the situation to reach the point where they are tempted and unable to resist. It is just where the difference between the Christian and the non-Christian becomes evident. For us it is a question of saying, "Our bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost — I belong to Christ and His Church, and His standards are mine, of respect, of purity, of love and trust, and

He has trusted me at this moment not only with my own body, but the body of someone else, whose personality I must not injure or violate. This instinct is a good one, given to me to be used for a certain end and under certain conditions, and at the right time I shall use it — but not now” — but you can’t say that when you are alone together on the couch or under the stars or wherever it is ! It’s got to be said, accepted and decided on long before, or else you may well be led into temptation, and there is no fire which burns more fiercely or consumes more violently. That was the trouble with John.

Sometimes the temptation lies in other directions. There are tons of literature available now which can cause the fire to flame up. Some of it is tawdry stuff, but much of it is first-class writing, and ought to be read. We cannot dismiss the novels of Graham Greene, or Sartre, and even such a book as *The Cruel Sea* is well worth reading, but they can also be the means of temptation, unless we have honestly recognized the possibility of their being misused in this way. The devil will use what we read or see as much as anything else, if we let him. Our Lord knew this perfectly well when he said that it was only necessary to have looked at a woman lustfully to have committed fornication in the heart.

Christ was tempted at all points as we are — to accept that fact is to go a long way towards resolving these problems, for it contains the assurance that, as He overcame, so may we in Him. His victory can be ours, though it may be a long and uphill fight.

Sin and forgiveness

And what if we fail ? A phrase which I first saw at the house of the Calvinist community at Taizé in France seems to me to sum up the promises of which we are assured : “Never defeated because always pardoned.” The whole point about the Christian community on earth is that it is a community of sinners, and the thing which makes life worth while for them in a way that nothing else on earth can, is that they know that they are sinners for whom Christ died, and that He has won them forgiveness for their sins. Every day we pray, “Forgive us...” It requires great humility to accept this fact, which is

one reason why we know so well that the chief of sins is pride and not sex. It requires great humility to say again and again and again, "I'm sorry", and then to start all over again with a new courage, but it is precisely in this way we grow up as the sons and daughters of God. Where failure in the sexual side of our life is concerned, the chief sin is so often pride. We hate having to admit that we were foolish and let ourselves get into danger, or lazy, or greedy, that we looked at the wrong things, or thought the wrong things, and went on thinking them long after we had recognized they were wrong. We hate admitting that we were thoroughly selfish, or that in a conceited way we relied on our own strength rather than His — and that is all pride at the bottom. That was Jim's chief trouble. The masturbation was a "hang-over" from his adolescence which had become a habit, and needed to be treated like any other rather unpleasant bad habit, but his sin was much more his wounded pride which had turned him in on himself, as is the case with very many people. To be able to pick yourself up, having said that you are sorry, really sorry, and mean by God's grace to do better in the future, and then start again trusting in the help of God, looking forward and not backward, is a long way towards a solution. But you may have to do this many, many times — it is a part of the pattern of life for sinners who are called to be saints. There is nothing unusual in the fact that this will appear to be the chief sin which you have to confess to God every time you come to Him in prayer, but in time you will discover that it takes its place, perhaps for a while as the most frequent sin, but certainly not the worst, by any means.

After you have said you are sorry, make your prayers a positive affirmation of thankfulness and love and desire to serve. A more complete surrender to the will of God for you will more surely lead you to the point where you are strengthened against sin rather than to a frenzied, "Good God, don't let me do this again."

Anne and Peter

And now Anne is saying, "But does this quite meet my situation with Bill?" Surely it does. One day you are going to be married, perhaps soon. You will, in time, become one person,

man and wife, but until that time comes, you can't wrench just one bit of that relationship out of its true setting. It is natural to want sexual intercourse now, but you have been called, as we all have, to live your lives as becomes the children of God — and that is supernatural! Sometimes that will be difficult, but you know in your hearts that it is right and wonderfully worth while, and in the end you will both be thankful you waited. And if that sometimes seems a doubtful point of view now, there is no doubt at all the other side of marriage.

And now about Peter. Can it be said of him, too, "Since God became man there is nothing human that cannot be made holy." Peter is inclined to think he is inhuman, and calls himself an invert, or pervert, or homosexual, with a fine disregard for the different meanings that these words can have. It would be much better if he and countless more like him stopped calling themselves names. He is just Peter standing before God who made him and died for him — who has redeemed every situation in which man can find himself, and that involves this one, too. The reasons why Peter's sexual instincts are turned in a different direction are too many to go into now, but even when they have been sorted out and explained, it will not necessarily make any difference to the way he feels about Alan. The solution of his problem depends not on him alone, but on the whole society, and the Christian Church in particular, because he is a part of it, and so we share it with him. It won't help him to feel that we are shocked, or disgusted, regard him as depraved (though he isn't), or as being selfish and sinfully perverse — which is nonsense, because he cannot help feeling as he does. That would not be the way of our Lord.

And if we accept him, then he must accept himself as he is at this moment. If he does that, he can go forward from there to the glory of God. No doubt part of the offering he will have to make will be of fear, of suffering, and of being misunderstood. He, too, will have to acknowledge temptation of a different, but not very different, kind, and sometimes there will be the need for forgiveness and a new start. But the chief sin is once again likely to be pride, and envy, self-pity and cowardice — not sex. He will need, a bit more than some, someone in whom he can confide and to whom he can speak freely. He will

have to share something of the loneliness of Christ, and that will be one means by which he will grow in holiness — but there is something else for him to share with our Lord, and that is His friendship, possibly in a greater degree than most men, a friendship which he will extend in His name to countless others and which will be a most fruitful and joyful expression of his love. It is really only in Christ that such a person can be assured that his life will have meaning, his personality be fulfilled, and his capacity to love and be loved be given that opportunity for expression which his human nature demands, because only there will he also find the discipline and conquest of self by God, “in whose service is perfect freedom”.

The human can become holy

As Christians we live always in community, and we gladly share all the responsibilities which spring from that. We cannot, and should not, talk about sex endlessly — but we should also recognize that it is possible to help one another at this point. It helps a great deal to talk it over with someone else, preferably someone older than ourselves. Many have found in the Church of England the real value of sacramental confession, with all the assurance it gives of a new start, and the opportunity for advice and help which it offers. But this sort of help is not always available, and then students have a responsibility to help one another with sympathy, understanding, a readiness to listen without prying or being a busybody, and courage to rebuke sometimes, too. This will need as much prayer as anything else — more. But such a sharing can well relieve the intolerable loneliness which some people feel, and even prevent disaster.

And after all, the chief point about our sexual life is not that it has problems, but that it is a wonderful gift from God, and the means by which we demonstrate our love for each other and the world about us! It is the power by which we create the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, and assert that lives that are human can become holy — that is, whole, complete, as God meant them to be.

Men and Women in Fellowship

KEITH and ELIZABETH BRIDSTON

"I've heard of prayers *for* women, but this is the first time I've heard of prayers *against* them! How about that, Elizabeth?"

"What's that, Keith?"

"Oh, there's a news item here that a Swedish pastor concluded his Sunday service with a prayer that 'God may deliver us from female pastors'. They must be running short of things to pray for in Sweden these days."

"Well . . . that's hardly praying against women as such. But it must have caused something of a stir."

"I guess it did. It finally took the bishop to pull him out of it. You have to go back to John Knox's trumpet blast against 'the monstrous Regiment of Women' to match this."

"Or James Thurber's *Men, Women and Dogs*."

"I'd forgotten about that. It will take high-level talks at the summit to pull men-women's relations out of this crisis."

"Seriously though, Keith, what was this all about?"

"It says in this paper there has been a debate in the Swedish parliament on the ordination of women to the ministry. I suppose this was intended to push things along at a higher level."

"Does it say how it was answered?"

"No. But if there was someone in the congregation like that old lady, Jenny something-or-other, of Edinburgh at the time of the Reformation, the answer might have been rather unexpected — and immediate! You remember she tossed her chair at the minister in St. Giles for praying in the wrong tone of voice — I think she called it in a 'popish way'."

"I must say I don't like the idea of a minister taking sides in his prayers."

"I agree. You feel you are being got at with no defence. Especially since pews are screwed down to the floor in most churches these days. However, in spite of the handicap, plenty of fuss has been stirred up by the whole affair."

"You know, it's interesting to see how strongly people react to this sort of thing. It's more than ordaining women pastors."

"The eternal battle of the sexes?"

"The nail on the head, to coin a phrase."

"But, Elizabeth, what do you think is the real cause of the misunderstandings which this type of controversy reveals? Is it really an eternal battle after all?"

"I suppose it partly has to do with the status of women. The World Council of Churches seems to think it important enough to set up a special commission on the subject. Or maybe the relations of men and women are just intrinsically fascinating, so that when there is a discussion of this sort, everyone wants to get in on it."

"You know the old saying: you can't get along with 'em and you can't get along without 'em. I can't remember whether it applies to wives or husbands. But it's the same difference."

Equality with a difference

"You've asked me, Keith; now, what do you think?"

"Just off-hand I'd say it's the question of equality. Women want it and men don't. That's where the battle starts — or the prayers. Personally, I'm all for equality. But, you know, it's funny. I sometimes have the feeling that you women don't want it when you get it."

"Of course we don't."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Simply, that I don't agree that it is *merely* a question of equality. In fact, it is just this oversimplification of the issue that creates so many of the difficulties in dealing with it. You think that giving women equality would solve all the problems apparently."

"Maybe not. But I thought it would help. However, this is just the thing that confuses me. Do you mean you believe in inequality? You must not be emancipated or something. I'd be more confused but I've run into this before. A woman will want to be treated equally in an organization or in an office, but then she'll also want to have doors opened for her. Perhaps that's the trouble. You women don't know what you really

want. You would like to have your cake and eat it too. Modern science hasn't gone far enough to lick that one yet."

"Just a moment. You're jumping to conclusions. Science hasn't solved that one either. I didn't say I believe in inequality. I said that the problem was not *only* that of equality. It has to be equality with something added — equality with a plus."

"Now wait a minute! How can you get equality-plus? When you have equality how can you have more? If you've got more than equality, someone else has got less — namely, me. That's really eating your cake with a vengeance. I guess you want the kind of situation in one of those totalitarian regimes where everyone is equal, but some are more equal than others."

"You sound as though I were proposing some new mathematical theory. Perhaps equality-plus isn't the choicest expression, but it really doesn't take an Einstein to figure it out. What I meant was that equality is only a partial ideal in the relations of men and women. But everyone holds it up as though that were all that women wanted. My point is that men and women are not the same."

"You mean we're different. This is getting a bit elementary, isn't it?"

"Perhaps. But not if equality-plus causes you mental strain! And that's all I'm trying to say: equality with a difference."

"It sounds pretty good. But I think a fourth dimension has crept in here somewhere. Equality-plus. Equal but different. I'm still holding on, but my finger-nails may give out on the next turn. Please elaborate."

"You're making this sound terribly complicated when it is really quite simple."

"Well, they say that only the truly simple things are profound. That may be the trouble. Nevertheless, equality with a difference adds up to inequality in my simple books. If something is added to equality — or taken away from it — it just can't be *absolute* equality. And that's why I think you women should decide what you really want. You have to decide whether you want to smoke cigars or to have doors opened for you. It's just like when women started wearing trousers. They didn't want to admit it, so they called them slacks. That's equality-plus. You can't fool me."

"I see what you mean — partly anyway. It may be we're using the term equality too rigidly — too mathematically. Men and women are different. No-one can change that."

"That's reassuring anyway."

"But at the same time, in some way or another, we are equal. What we have to do is to put those two things together. I suppose we women haven't been as clear as we might. Perhaps we aren't clear in our own minds. In a negative sense, however, we are clear. Everywhere I've been — in America, in Europe, and now here in Asia — I find women are dissatisfied with their status. I remember a friend in Edinburgh saying — rather bitterly — that she felt she was 'condemned to being a vegetable' by having to spend all her time shopping, cooking, and looking after the children; her investment in a professional university training seemed to be completely wasted. You might be surprised to know how many women feel that way. And it has been a surprise to me to find so many here in Asia feeling much the same spirit of revolt. The fact is that women today are not satisfied with their traditional status. But this question of the ordination of women is too advanced. Most women I know are not worrying about ordination. But they still aren't satisfied with their position."

"But isn't this the old struggle for equality? As I say, I'm willing to admit equality. Most of us men have accepted the inevitability of the emancipation of women. But you seem to be hesitant about that."

Equality to be herself

"I am. And the reason is that equality doesn't do justice to the deepest needs of a woman. I think a woman should have equality. But equality not just to be equal, but to be herself. I almost said 'to be different', but that *would* have confused you! You see, I believe men and women are different and that it is only honest to recognize that. I would say, for instance, that there is a peculiar womanly instinct to give herself — totally and completely — to something or someone. Shouldn't she have the equal right with a man to do this, for instance, in the service of the Church? I think that the Roman Catholics

are ahead of us Protestants in this respect. They may not do justice to the spiritual possibilities of the relationship of men and women in marriage. But the Roman Church gives women the possibility to give themselves completely in a Christian vocation."

"Don't you think we offer that in our Protestant churches?"

"Not in the same sense. So many Christian women I know are frustrated by the feeling that their talents are not being fully used in the life of the Church. Cooking church suppers doesn't satisfy the desire for total commitment. What we need are signs. The Roman Catholic woman gets a ring and a bridal veil when she gives herself fully to the service of the Church. But what sign does our Protestant Church have for women as an expression of its theology of the priesthood of *all* believers?"

"How about Mothers' Day?"

"I think it may mean more to the florists than to spiritually frustrated housewives."

"Yes, but how about the home as a full-time Christian vocation? The Eastern Orthodox talk about the home as the 'little church'. Theologically speaking, that's real equality. It's the priesthood of *all* believers. It's your equality with a difference, if I understand it rightly. You know, I'm beginning to think that the source of trouble about the status of women doesn't have to do with equality but with the spiritual significance of our differences. We have fallen into the habit of thinking that some kind of abstract, absolute equality is the great ideal for the emancipated Christian woman. But I wonder if it is. What I think is needed is a deep theological explanation of the meaning of our differences."

"But don't forget the equality!"

"I won't. However, I think we may find the only true kind of equality between men and women by first understanding the meaning of their differences and accepting them, rather than by trying to abolish or ignore them. Wasn't it Bernard De Voto who said: 'What every career woman needs is a good wife.' That's the logical completion of the circle of pure equality. I read an article recently called 'Husbands — the New Servant Class'. There's too much difference in that kind of equality, but maybe I'm just old-fashioned."

Equal — normal

"You would prefer to use another word than equality?"

"I'm beginning to think we might do better. I notice that the Federation is giving some attention to the question: how can the S.C.M. be a fellowship in which men and women can live together normally, and how can it be a help in dealing with the tension arising as a result of the traditional prejudices about the status of women? The word equality isn't mentioned."

"But is the word 'normally' any better?"

"Well, at least it doesn't prejudge what the true relationship of men and women ought to be in a Christian community. When you talk about equality, somehow a false ideal is set up. When you talk about normally, there are also possibilities of misunderstanding. But it is a bit more neutral at least."

"What misunderstandings do you foresee in talking about the normal relations between men and women? It seems to me it includes the idea of equality without putting it in an extreme way. Normally could mean equal but different. And it wouldn't bruise those logical sensitivities of yours!"

"You definitely have a one-track mind — at the best, two tracks: equal but different! 'Normally' might be a change for the better at that. However, there are some dangers here. There is a lot of foolish talk these days about developing 'natural' relations between men and women. And I think many people use the term 'natural' and 'normal' interchangeably. For example, the Kinsey report seems to imply that the 'natural' is 'normal' and the 'normal' is 'natural'. When you try to use either of them as guides for ethical conduct, you are on very shaky ground. The Kinseyan norm of the 'natural', with its implied rejection of the 'artificial' inhibitions and call to animal freedom, is an attractive heresy, except that men and women are not just animals. Furthermore, it is not at all certain what is truly 'natural'. That's where theology comes in. It *must* come in or the heresy could be true."

"I'm not sure theology gives us much guidance here."

"That's a very common view. Fortunately, it's wrong. We have been shown what is truly normal in human relationships.

Or perhaps you could say that God has shown us two kinds of normalcy : normalcy outside of God and normalcy in relation to God. You know, it's too bad that Kinsey and Co. don't know about sin : or rather, don't recognize it when they see it. The Bible has plenty to say about 'natural' man, and it isn't very complementary. But it has also shown us a True Man, the only One who is really normal. If these high-priests of sociology didn't have such naive views of human nature, they might be a bit more humble in their pontifical pronouncements."

"But do you think the Federation formulation, 'a fellowship in which men and women can live together normally', has fallen into this ?"

"Not in any such crude way, of course. But it might imply that there is a standard of normalcy in the relations between men and women which exists without any reference to theological principles. You know — the Society for Christian Marriage and all that — 'just go to the summer conference and it might happen to you'."

"You're treading on sacred ground !"

Biblical fundamentals

"I think it's all wonderful ; marriage is a wonderful institution ; Christian marriage is even more wonderful. I have no quarrels with any Society for Christian Matrimony. But it is still important to understand the biblical fundamentals. In Genesis it says that 'male and female created he them'. And then St. Paul writes that in Christ there is 'neither male or female'. Those are principles which should determine our understanding of what 'normally' really means."

"But, Keith, those statements are just contradictory. You have to accept one or the other for your principle."

"In practice, I think that is what often happens. Some emphasize the created distinction between male and female as all important. And so, in our Batak church service on Sunday morning the men sit on one side and the women on the other. But perhaps in the S.C.M. we tend to over-emphasize the other side ; we only think about equality in Christ and ignore our God-given differences. In fact, perhaps this is partly the reason

why we are so uneasy about sex education in our S.C.M. programs. It isn't just that it is a delicate subject. It is also that we haven't learned to face sex in a theological frame of mind. So when we talk about the S.C.M. as 'a fellowship in which men and women can live together normally', we may unconsciously visualize a sophisticated community in which sexual differences no longer matter, or are casually ignored. But I don't think the unity which Paul is referring to means this. It is more dialectical than a moratorium on sex. I think it means that in Christ we are given the hope of redeeming that difference between man and woman which has been the source of so much evil and misery, but which was intended to be the highest joy and gift from God to man."

"I certainly agree with that. And it is precisely the reason why I think that pure equality is a false ideal in the relations between men and women. It is actually turning our back on the gift of God. Equality can be a very selfish and individualistic desire. Unless equality is expressed in some sort of fellowship, it does mean trying to have your cake and eat it too. There is one other thing that bothers me, however. What *are* our differences, theologically speaking? You say that we should accept our differences. But as we have been talking I have been thinking that it isn't so easy to exactly describe them."

"Is it so important to do that? Can't we just say we're different and let it go at that?"

Theological principles and cultural variation

"Well, what I was thinking of was the difference between Asian and Western societies in the relations of men and women. Coming here to the middle of Sumatra from the middle of the United States, you feel very perplexed about what is normal, or even what should be! You talked about women and men sitting on opposite sides of the church on Sunday morning. Is that right or wrong? It's a small thing, of course, but it symbolizes to me the difficulty of establishing what is normal in men-women relations, even in the Church and even from purely theological principles. Is this type of separation bad theology, or is it just cultural variation?"

"Frankly, I think it is purely utilitarian, Elizabeth. If it weren't for separate seating, the men wouldn't get a place to sit. However, I must say it does remind me a little of the sheep and the goats, if we are looking for some theological fundamentals."

"But hasn't it struck you that the old traditional common-law gives a surprising amount of attention to the regulation of the relations of men and women?"

"You mean, a brother not being allowed to touch his sister, and a father-in-law not being permitted to face his son's wife, and that sort of thing. I guess it's fairly common in societies of this sort. But, as you say, it is difficult to know at what points the Christian faith should make a difference. Up to now I would say it hasn't made much. And it is confusing to try to establish some firm theological principles too. We talk about the 'headship' of the man in the family and we assume that it is the father. But in the Batak family it might be the uncle, since he is the eldest brother. And if the Church ever expanded into the Minangkabau area to the south of us here, we would have to deal with a matriarchal society. I think Sarah Chakko and Karl Barth tangled over this at the Amsterdam Assembly, when he tried to prove some theological point by the fact that the man in the house served the meal and she said it was just the opposite among her people. I think we would be running into the same difficulties all the time if we tried to set up some standards of normalcy for the S.C.M. or any other international movement."

"Well, it is all this variation between cultures and peoples which makes me wonder if it's worth while even trying to discuss what the Christian fellowship of men and women 'normally' should be."

"I'm not entirely pessimistic in spite of these difficulties. For one thing, certain obvious discrepancies between our theological principles and the actual state of men and women's relations can be pointed up in the Church. Here, for example, you can be a bit cynical and say that the men treat their women as equal only when it is to their own advantage: the women can harvest the rice but they can't sit on the same side of the church as the men. Nevertheless, if it weren't for the Christian Gospel, girls still wouldn't be educated. You remember that

old Batak lady the other evening telling us what a revolution that had been. There are similar injustices in the treatment of women in other societies — in Europe or America they are just more subtle. But, in the same way, the Christian Gospel slowly and irresistibly changes things; people can't quite treat one another in the same way after the shadow of Christ has passed."

"Yes, but still... is 'normally' a word that can be used with meaning considering all these national variations? Even the power of the Christian faith can't create a new universal and uniform culture, even though some of the old missionaries seemed to think it could."

"Normal" relationships in the S.C.M.

"Elizabeth, I quite agree that these cultural factors have often been underestimated. After all, speaking of theological fundamentals, even Pauline theology is culturally conditioned. We have to recognize his androcentric tendencies when we appeal to his words for authority. But, all this taken for granted, the Christian Gospel creates a spiritual milieu in which, willy nilly, human relationships are transformed, including those between men and women. You can see that very clearly here. In the hundred years since Christianity has come, the position of the woman has been revolutionized, even if she still has to sit on the wrong side of the church! And, as a matter of fact, I think we should see that something has happened in the S.C.M. We talk about creating a fellowship in which men and women live together normally. In a quite remarkable way, the S.C.M. already *is* that."

"Certainly in comparison with most of our churches, Keith. As one gets away from the S.C.M. and moves into the ordinary life of the Church, one begins to appreciate the precious thing the Federation experience has been. We hear all this wrangling about the ordination of women pastors in the churches. And yet in our S.C.M.s we just take it for granted that one year a local or travelling secretary will be a woman and perhaps the next year a man. In fact, if it weren't for some very able women S.C.M. leaders quite an embarrassingly large number of national Movements of the Federation wouldn't exist. And who ever

thinks of whether a man or woman is taking evening prayers at a student Christian conference? Yes, I think you really have something there."

"Maybe we only have to accept the fellowship of men and women in our S.C.M.s as being normal, not only for themselves, but for the whole life of the Church. If you think it through, it might have rather radical implications. It isn't just by chance that the Federation has never had to set up a special commission on the status of women, as the World Council has had to do."

"However, Keith, before you take the light out from under the bushel, I'd like to trim the wick a wee bit. What the S.C.M. has achieved as a normal fellowship of men and women seems to me to be rather heavily weighted on the side of equality. And, as I think I said before, I believe in equality with differences."

"Not that again!"

"Just that. We talk a great deal about the ecumenical unity of the Body of Christ. One of the most helpful things I have found in understanding ecumenism is Oliver Tomkins' book in which he stresses its meaning as wholeness. But we haven't given very much attention to the ecumenical wholeness of the Body as it relates to men and women. Or if we have, it has been in terms of equality. But I think it is our differences which give the wholeness. So many people are embarrassed by our differences. They seem to think they threaten our unity. We know that problem in the relations between the churches. But the same thing is true in the relations between men and women in most Christian fellowships. We so often play down these differences of our sex and cover them up, when we should see them as the God-given diversity through which the wholeness of the Body is realized."

Fellowship and wholeness

"I can add something to that, Elizabeth, though you have said about all that needs to be said on this whole question."

"Do you mean our minds have finally met?"

"Yes, but differently. You are thinking of wholeness. I am thinking of fellowship. The word comes from the idea of laying down something together in a joint undertaking. As you say, I think many men and women are embarrassed by the fact that they are different ; they subconsciously feel guilty about it. Therefore, they try to hide their difference when they come into a so-called 'religious' environment, as though that fact itself were evil or sinful or unclean. It seems to me that one of the greatest services which the S.C.M. can give its members is to remind them that God made them different. He even intended that difference to cause tension, because tension is creative. And He intended that those differences should be brought together, to become 'one flesh'. In other words, there can't be a normal Christian fellowship unless these differences are accepted. And there can be no true fellowship unless both men and women make it up, because their differences together make it whole. If the S.C.M. can lead its members to see that divine normalcy, it will be fulfilling one of the most difficult parts of its ecumenical vocation as a pioneering body."

Are the Unmarried Incomplete ?

RENA KAREFA-SMART

She came towards us, her face alight, her habit flowing, and her eyes full of a warm welcome.

"... enchanté, Madame. C'est bien que Monsieur le Docteur Karefa ait sa famille maintenant."

Although thus recognizing the joys of a reunited family, this Mother Superior, freely bound by the vow of chastity to a life of celibacy, seemed to me to be as whole a person, as complete a personality, as I had met in a long while. Set in a small village in French Equatorial Africa, having returned to her native France only twice in over twenty years, and living by choice without the protection and resources of family life, she was yet all that one has in mind when picturing a complete person. She was possessed of a warmth, an air of quiet purposefulness, an out-going vitality, and she seemed serenely at peace.

We know that no-one is complete in the sense of having no need to grow more, or to overcome weaknesses in character, or to conquer besetting sins. All men and women "fall short", and are less than whole persons in some sense. Whether married or unmarried, every person is incomplete when judged by his potentialities and when seen in relation to what perfection in Christ requires. We are concerned with the question whether the unmarried person is in some special sense incomplete, as the married person is not. Rather than asking ourselves whether the unmarried person can ever be wholly complete, in the sense that we ask this about all men — no matter what their marital status — we are attempting to face a question that puzzles all people of marriageable age. In other words, if a person is unmarried, whether by choice or because of circumstances, must he look forward to a life in which he cannot hope to be as complete a person as he could be if he were married ? Is the nun, because she is unmarried, less a person than she would be if she were a wife ? Can the career woman, unmarried by choice, ever

hope to be as whole a person as she could have been had she remained "in the home" ? And what of the missionary, the priest, the unmarried man or woman with no "prospect" for a life partner ?

For the Christian, the question becomes, "Is there possible for the unmarried a vocation that is productive not only of as much completeness in life as is possible for the married, but that is also in some special way enriched by the conditions characteristic of the life of the unmarried ? Has God planned human societies in such a way that each collectivity can develop more fully through the unique contributions of its unmarried members who, as individuals, and sometimes as groups, serve to enrich it ?"

The answer to what constitutes completion for the unmarried cannot be given fully here. I have tried, however, to indicate what seem to me to be the bases of such completion, and in doing so to give a ringing "no" to the question-title of this article. I know that the only valid proof of the truth of the conviction out of which this article has grown, is to be found in the lives of those unmarried men and women who have been blessed with the gift of completion. And since this is so, the best method of answering our question would be to write a series of biographies of people selected from various periods of history and differing cultures. I believe this could be done. However, within the limits of these pages, it is perhaps possible to help those who wish to converse with one another and others about the directions along which a Christian answer to our query can be achieved. Towards this end, I have written what follows.

The vocation of unmarried Christians

Such persons have a glorious opportunity to witness to the deepest meanings of spiritual family ties. For they are called to live in relation to others in the Christian community as brothers or sisters, exploring to the full the far reaches of spiritual union with those who are given to them to love. Through such relationships they can witness to the reality of a private morality lived in disciplined obedience to the leading of a Father whose children they and their brothers and sisters are. And, even as

they are made more complete as children of God's family, they help to strengthen the ties within the family itself, and to extend it, for in their workaday worlds they are in contact with many whose need is to be brought "home" to the Father's welcome. Whereas the married Christian is called to a life that works out its obedience within a small, intimate unit — proceeding from it to the wider circle of relationships in congregation and community, and discovering in the close adjustment to other members of his biological family analogies to life in the spiritual family — the unmarried Christian, foregoing the riches of participation in the creation and nurture of a biological family unit, works out his obedience in taking on the joys and sorrows of those of his brothers and sisters with whom he finds himself in constant relationship. In these encounters he can witness to the reality of love, mercy, justice, fidelity and sacrifice — to mention only a few of the points of Christian living — and in doing so become a whole person, complete in that he gives himself fully to the relationships permitted him within the Christian community and in the world, discovering through them that truth which God wishes to reveal to him, and being used in the relationships to reveal this truth to others. In such relationships I have seen unmarried Christians find completion ; through such obedience to the demands of life in the spiritual family I have seen them become whole.

The vocation of the unmarried Christian has special significance in societies as different as the American and the West African. In the United States, the romanticizing of love, glorification of sex, and idealizing of monogamous marriage are so widespread that unmarried persons — especially women — are made to feel that they are to be pitied, life having passed them by. In West Africa, where polygamy and monogamy exist side by side, unmarried adults are considered by all to be "marking time". Little or no help is given to a young man of education who may never find a suitable mate (the number of educated women being much smaller than that of men), or to a young woman who chooses to remain unmarried rather than become part of a polygamous family, in arriving at an understanding of the possibilities for completion as a brother or sister within the family of the Christian community. In both America

and West Africa Christian congregations have the tremendous twin tasks of realizing their familial nature in the working out of true kinship between all their members, and of so leavening society that new patterns emerge in the man-woman relationship of our day, which enable the unmarried person to live as complete a life and to become as whole a person as the married person can become. The great need is for a profound change in prevailing attitudes concerning what constitutes the source and nature of the good life for persons — men and women, married and unmarried. Only Christians can give an adequate demonstration through life in community that will meet this need, nowhere more evident than in the frustrated, fear-ridden lives of so many of today's unmarried men and women.

Stumbling-blocks to completion : fears to be faced and overcome

I do not wish to discount or minimize the very real fears that often beset those who are marriageable but single. Men and women who long for marriage are naturally tempted to allow fears for the future to overcome them, thus falling short of their possibilities in the present. Some of these fears are common, but easily recognized and conquered, whereas others have arisen from the widespread failure of societies to allow the unmarried adult a normal, creative role free from stigma. The fear of what people will think, of being counted a social failure if one remains single after thirty, and the related sense of panic that assails many young adults, are all rooted in a false understanding of existence which places other people's reactions and oneself at life's centre. These and similar fears are recognized and tabooed fairly easily by the earnest Christian, and it is possible to have real help in overcoming them. Fears of another kind — those that are rooted in a realistic understanding of the limitations placed by society (whether "developed" or "undeveloped") upon the unmarried adult — are not so easy to overcome, even though they may be easily recognized. An unmarried young adult has cause to fear his ability to maintain Christian relationships with others, especially those of the opposite sex, for he is constantly confronted with the temptation to exploit others for his own sexual satisfaction. It is a commonplace that mass media such

as television, radio and cinema conspire to place sex in a position that distorts its true place in the fulfilment of human personality, exalting it in a way that is almost idolatrous. With the coming of improved means of communication to West Africa the same problem appears. (Complicating the situation in such places as Nigeria is the scepticism with which many young Christian intellectuals respond to what they are told are the principles of Christian social behaviour. They question the possibility of chastity for an adult, the practicability of a single standard of behaviour for men and women, and the truth of the claim for equality of men and women. Also they believe in the natural leadership of all men and the docility of all women, thus making it impossible for women, no matter how highly trained, to find completion in any vocation other than that of homemaker. The bulk of the women support this position.) Then there is the fear that springs from the realization of the extent to which the widespread depersonalization of work and the anonymity of urban life make loneliness for the unmarried adult almost inevitable. And unmarried women especially have to face the possibility of a lack of material security — and of a life without children. This is to mention only a few of the fears that make life difficult for the unmarried young adult.

New experiments in life in community

Although these and other fears are come by quite naturally as a result of the conditioning processes through which most children and young people go, they are not overcome without real struggle. Even after they have been recognized and faced for what they are, and even when the person who is plagued by them determines to do all in his power to triumph over them, they may persist, often just below the surface, helping to produce the neuroses with which contemporary psychology has made us familiar. The Christian community, properly one without fear, must be able to help its unmarried members find release from these and other obstacles to completion. It is not enough that fear be seen for what it is — this is only the beginning of the remedy. The family of Christians must go beyond analysis to action. And at this point there is need for imagina-

tive experimenting in social relationships. Each cultural situation will require a fresh approach, but pooling of results across cultural barriers will help the search in each locality. Christians in West Africa know little, for instance, of the experiments in communitarian life taking place in Western Europe and parts of South America. They can learn much that is instructive for people who are searching for a life in community, especially those among the "cultural refugees" who, as Christians, have received the promise (without much fulfilment) of a richer life than they have known in tribal existence. The practice of evaluating the possible contribution of each member of the community (*after* having accepted the chosen role of each one) and building the life of the group on the basis of the total of these contributions, with every person being equally responsible for decisions that affect all, is an approach that has unlimited possibilities for those concerned to help with a more satisfactory integration of unmarried adults in the life of the community. As Christians experiment more and more with each other, and also with others of different faiths, in new approaches to meeting such needs as the overcoming of conditions out of which the fears of the unmarried arise, a social revolution as profound as the one responsible for the "emancipation" of women will be set in motion. The burden of a revolution is rightly that of Christians, for we are the ones who have inspired the hope for abundant life in all manners and conditions of people — women as well as men, slaves as well as free, unmarried as well as married. We are called upon as a family to find the answers to completion for the unmarried among us, as well as those who are "in the world". Our recognition of the validity of monogamy would require this, even if promises to all men of freedom from the grounds for fear did not.

Marriage a stumbling-block to completion

There remains the need to consider those who are unmarried or who contemplate not marrying because marriage, they feel, either requires qualities they lack or makes demands that would conflict with the demands of their vocation. Two types of decision seem to be characteristic here, one a permanent rejec-

tion of marriage, and the other a choice involving only the foreseeable future. Many choose to postpone marriage because of the cost and length of preparation for the vocation they have chosen ; others choose a vocation, the terms of which preclude marriage, or they decide to live in a part of the world where marriage to a person of a certain racial or national background would be a hindrance or an impossibility (immigration details, for example). These are, of course, only some of the factors that may determine an individual's decision to remain single. For some the decision is made quite apart from any relationship, and in these cases all future friendships are developed in light of such a choice. Others feel forced to reject marriage to a particular person, but are open to the possibility that in the future they may be part of a friendship that will lead to marriage. Apart from simply calling attention to such situations and the kind of factors involved in them, I feel qualified only to indicate what, to me, is the only legitimate approach to them for Christians. I feel that Christian obedience calls for what might be called *ad hoc* thinking on the matter of marriage and vocation. That is, unless there is a person who makes the possibility of marriage real, the vocation decision should not be complicated by theoretical considerations. The question, "Shall I ever marry ?", except in the case of persons having unalterable physical or psychological limitations, is not one to be raised. "Does God want X and me to marry ?" seems to me to be the only form in which the question can legitimately arise. I can find no grounds, biblical or otherwise, for a permanent rejection of marriage by an individual, whether it results from a vow of chastity or from such factors as are suggested above. Postponement — perhaps, rejection — no.

I have tried to sketch the outlines of a position that claims for every person, whether married or unmarried, the possibility of completion or wholeness in life. The realization of the limitations which are placed by societies upon the single person, leads to the conclusion that the Christian community is confronted with the need of demonstrating patterns of relationship and approaches to group life that help in the revolutionizing of the role of the unmarried person and in the release from fear that is the temptation of many. It has been possible only to indicate

my conviction that the choice to remain unmarried, whether made with or without reference to a specific person, is really the same kind of choice that is made by the Christian person who decides to marry. It cannot be made legitimately in any absolute way, for unless the Christian asks himself continually, "Is this what God is leading me to do ?", always remaining open to the possibility that one's understanding of God's will for one may make necessary a revision of one's life and the changing of commitments that one has made, he closes himself off from the source of Christian obedience. So it is that the person who is led to a life of religious celibacy must, I feel, take a vow that is to be honoured in the present, and only as long as he continues to have divine assurance that the vocation he has chosen is the right one for him. If ever he is led to feel (and I see no grounds for believing that some people might not be led to such a vocation for only part of their lives) that marriage and another role in the Christian community is right for him, he is entirely within a Christian position to change his vocation and his role in the community.

It is beyond question, I feel, that the role of the unmarried person in societies that accept monogamy as the only form of marriage that is acceptable, and that at the same time create a surplus of marriageable women, presents us, within the Christian community, with a tremendous need for revolutionary thinking and action. Because of this realization, rather than because of any competence on my part to give helpful answers raised by the subject of this article, I have agreed to try to help see the outlines of the discussion which students may undertake.

Choosing a Partner

FRANCES GLENDENNING

Men choose, women are chosen. How simple it looks, written down on paper. In practice, of course, it is not nearly so neat and tidy. The lover and his beloved both claim that they have chosen each other and been chosen by each other. Choosing a partner is a mutual act ; a man may choose a woman, but if she does not choose him, he will not be choosing a partner.

If it is agreed that both men and women do the choosing, the next question is, "Is there any choice ?" Most people in the West would give an unhesitating affirmative to this question. Choice is seen as a right and as fundamental to the very structure of Western marriage, linked as it is with the relative emancipation, not only of women, but of young people in general. "Arranged marriages" are spoken of with mingled scorn and pity, and polite incredulity is registered when such marriages are said to last for more than six months.

There are some fatalists who restrict the area of choice to the absolute minimum, that is, to one person. They wait for Mr. or Miss Right to appear, and believe that the world is organized to this end. Perhaps a salutary bit of advice for such people is that what matters is not who you marry but how you marry.

The Western conviction about the right to choose is a little shaken by the number of freely-chosen partnerships which come to a premature end. Or at least the ability to use this right in a responsible manner is questioned. So in this situation of perplexity, this article offers, not an infallible guide to the choice of the perfect partner, but some practical comments and observations which point to the relevance and realism of the Christian Gospel, over against the smooth blandishments of Hollywood, the juke box and the popular press.

Choosing a partner for what ?

In this context, the choice of a partner is not for tennis, dancing or business, but for life. To choose someone to live with, to share one's life with, is a responsible decision, and not

a matter to be settled by the tossing of a coin. Birth and death are outside the realm of choice, but marriage is founded upon it. Partnership in marriage is not the deepest kind of friendship ; it is the relationship where two people become one person, not only through the act of physical intercourse, but through the whole process of discovering the other person. Physical intercourse is part of the process of overcoming the "desolation of separateness".

In some ways it is possible, perhaps too easy, to departmentalize friendships, to be gay with some, serious with others, and confidential with a third group. But when two people choose each other for life, they have no choice about which bits of themselves they will reveal to the other. Choosing a partner involves a removal of all barriers and all notices saying, "Private — keep out". These barriers are not removed without pain and difficulty ; being "in love" is not an anaesthetic, nor a guarantee that the operation of giving one's life to another person will be painless. Indeed, it is more like a death and a resurrection.

Choosing a partner is a responsible decision, and however responsibly it is made, the element of risk cannot wholly be excluded. There are so many unknown and unknowable factors, the partners themselves, the future and so on. Therefore, the partner is chosen on the assumption that life together continues, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death ends the partnership.

Marriage is like Abraham's journey, a venture of faith ; man and wife go out together, not knowing where they are going. The choice of partner, therefore, is partly determined by the conception of the venture to be undertaken.

Where to choose a partner ?

For many students the answer is to choose a partner from among fellow students. The complaint that many women students come to the university in order to find a husband is only justified if they pursue this activity with such energy and single-mindedness that they fail all examinations and take no part in the general life of the university ! If women students find husbands, the converse is also true, that men

students find wives, and this is usually a cause for congratulation rather than complaint !

In many ways the university provides an excellent environment for choosing a partner. Men and women meet together freely, study together, work together on committees and in student societies. This is a much more satisfactory setting in which to get to know people than in the more artificial atmosphere of "dates" and dances and going to the cinema, where it is relatively easy to be on one's best behaviour all the time.

The mixed society of the university also provides opportunities for gaining a fairly wide experience of the opposite sex. Not all men are alike and not all women are alike, and it is good to have practical experience of this before making the final choice. A "wide experience of the opposite sex" is not synonymous with a kind of butterfly existence, flitting from one to another, sipping here, tasting there, never settling for long. Within a university environment, it should be possible to get to know a number of the opposite sex quite well, and to avoid both the butterfly existence and the very exclusive friendship which, should it come to an end, makes it very difficult for the two to settle back into the stream of student life and to be accepted again by the groups from which they originally cut themselves off.

The university is one of the few places where men and women can work together without rigid distinctions between "men's work" and "women's work". This is a most valuable background against which to rethink our conception of "man" and "woman", and such a rethinking is necessary. Students learn to be chary about generalizations ; it is part of their discipline. But in a discussion on men and women, discretion is often abandoned, and men are labelled "strong, brave, protective", and women "weak, timid, clinging". Of course these descriptions do not tally with the facts. Not all men have these masculine characteristics and not all women have these feminine ones. Although in the ordinary course of friendships the mixture of masculine and feminine in each person is taken for granted, yet when it comes to choosing a partner, the man wants what he calls "a real woman" and the woman wants "a real man".

This is where stereotyped ideas of man and woman can be really harmful. Is a man any less a "real man" because he needs to confide in and be protected by a woman? Is a woman not a "real woman" because she has greater dexterity in mending a fuse than in mending socks? Bitter but unnecessary disillusionment can be the result when the chosen partner does not conform to the stereotype. A wide experience of the opposite sex can do much to break down a false stereotype, which is built up out of fantasy rather than from observable data.

The essential thing in choosing a partner is not to look for a ninety-nine per cent masculine man or a ninety-nine per cent feminine woman, but to look for someone of the opposite sex. D. T. Niles, quoting a list of qualifications for marriage as drawn up by an Indian priest, once said that the first requirement was that the couple should be of the opposite sex! Here is the answer to the doubt about whether intellectual women, for example, make good wives. It depends whether their partner is their complement.

In this mixture of masculinity and femininity which goes to make up each person, the complementary nature of the sexes is made plain. For a long time the theologians have been stressing that man made in the image of God is male and female, "male and female created he them". From this ground springs a true understanding of the relationship between the sexes; without it the created and creative difference between man and woman is smothered, either in the subjection of one sex, or in the fight for emancipation.

The opportunities which a university provides for students to meet freely together in the course of their work are denied to many students in single sex colleges. They are not thereby debarred from marriage, but they do miss the invaluable experience of making friendships through working, and not just playing, together. In England, for example, many girls, after attending a girls' school, go to a women's training college, and after two years are back in a girls' school again. Sometimes the S.C.M. has been the only organization to arrange inter-college activities for both men and women. Apart from the college dance (for which suitable groups of men are imported), S.C.M. meetings are the only opportunity for some women

students to meet men students. Such meetings are deservedly popular.

Possibly a higher proportion of training college students marry boy friends whom they knew before going to college. It is more difficult for university students to sustain such friendships through the longer university course, when inevitably they change very much and perhaps grows incomprehensible to friends of their schooldays.

One practical point in thinking about where to choose a partner is to take the immediate environment into consideration. On the whole, the soft lights and contemporary folk rhythms of the dance hall or the moonlight on the deck of a ship are not conducive to the most clear-headed decisions. Promises made under such conditions need reinforcing or reconsidering in the coffee bar or some equally mundane spot.

Whom to choose for a partner ?

Must I be "in love" in order to marry ? How do I know when I am really "in love" ? Must we have the same tastes, belong to the same church, the same political party, the same race ?

These questions and many others arise in choosing a partner.

Love is the essential factor in marriage, the love which recognizes and affirms the reality of the "other" who stands over against us. This is not the love registered on the cinema screen to the background of swelling chords, nor the love which makes the hero's heart miss a beat when the heroine in a novel waves her eyelashes, nor yet the love which will surely come to those who use XYZ lustrous hair shampoo.

There is so much to unlearn as well as to learn about love. No-one can pretend to be untouched by the contemporary climate of opinion, which is diligently fed and watered by the pseudo-romanticism of the film and fostered by the advertisers' appeal to male and female vanity.

Love is an affair of the will as well as of the emotions. William, in D. H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, is troubled by his own feelings for his sweetheart : "You know, mother, when I'm away from her I don't care for her a bit. I shouldn't care if I never saw her again. But, then, when I'm with her in the evenings, I am awfully fond of her."

"It's a queer sort of love to marry on," said Mrs. Morel. Her advice was, "Remember, there are worse things than breaking off an engagement."

When Antony is away from Cleopatra, she reacts in exactly the opposite way from William Morel :

"O Charmian, where think'st thou he is now ? Stands he or sits he ?

Or does he walk ? Or is he on his horse ?"

William Morel and Cleopatra may not be exactly representative of this student generation, but they serve to show one of the differences between infatuation and love.

A common interest in music, films, and so on, may do much to build up the relationship between partners, but it is not nearly so important as a harmony of understanding about the deeper issues of sex, religion and politics.

Something has already been said about the complementary nature of the sexes, and it is of paramount importance that both partners should see their relationship as being in God's image : "Male and female created he them." It is easy enough to *say* that the sexes are complementary, but to *live* like "a man of property" and a "clinging vine". For the "one flesh" relationship to become a reality, man and woman must stand on the same side of the sex barrier.

Does love conquer all ?

Divisions in religion and politics bite deep into human nature. To gloss over them during courtship on the grounds that "love" will triumph is to reduce the relationship to a superficial one. Agreement to differ or not to discuss suggests an explosion sooner or later. Divisions of this kind must really be taken seriously when, for example, the partners are practising members, one of the Roman and the other of a non-Roman Catholic church, or active supporters of opposing political parties. Where one or both are lapsed or nominal members, the danger of division is decreased.

This is not to suggest that a true partnership can only exist between the like-minded, or those with no particular convictions. There are many examples of successful marriages in spite of these deep divisions, but those who embark upon

them must do so with a lively recognition of the need for grace, a large degree of self-knowledge and emotional maturity, and a small quota of false romanticism.

These demands are also made where the chosen partner is of different race, especially where the difference is between European and Asian or African. While there is no theological reason against inter-racial marriage, the very real practical difficulties must be faced. One of the major problems is not the possibly indeterminate colour of the children and their rootlessness, as is so often put forward, but the difficulty of East and West standing together on their understanding of the male-female relationship.

One of the great contributions of the West has been towards a new pattern of husband-wife relationship which is potentially richer, deeper and closer than has been seen before in history, and which cuts clean across traditional Eastern patterns of family life. Nevertheless, this comes under the heading of practical difficulties and is not to be magnified into an absolute objection.

The West has been able to make this contribution partly because of the practice of delaying marriage until a degree of emotional maturity (which lags so far behind physical maturity) has been attained. The advice, "choose someone of the opposite sex", should be amended to "choose an adult of the opposite sex". One of the characteristics of an adult is that he has left his father and mother. Five times the Bible iterates that, when a man marries, he shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife. Physical separation from parents may not be possible in situations of housing shortage, but the psychological break must be complete, and this can only come with emotional maturity.

No article of this kind can ever be complete, just as the act of choosing a partner is neither complete nor self-contained. Like conversion, it is part of a process. Some people can put a time and a date to their choice of a partner, others will say that they gradually grew together. Whichever way the choice is made, let neither state nor university, nor politics nor economics, nor parents, nor the partners themselves delay too long the natural sequel to the choice of a partner, which is marriage.

How Far Can We Go?

WILLIAM HAMILTON

An American, speaking to the question of pre-marital chastity, must acknowledge that he writes and lives in the post-Kinsey age. The Kinsey figures brought no surprise, but they did give pretty decisive evidence for something many had suspected: that no moral standard is so earnestly promulgated and so widely violated as that which restricts sexual intercourse to marriage. Professor Kinsey noted that among men ninety-eight per cent of those who never went beyond grade school (roughly age thirteen) had some form of sexual experience before marriage; eighty-four per cent of those who never went beyond high school (age seventeen) had pre-marital sexual experience, and sixty-seven per cent of the men who had been to college or university had had such experience. The figures are interestingly inverted for women: thirty per cent of those stopping their education with grade school, forty-seven per cent of those stopping with high school, and sixty per cent of those who had been to college, had some form of pre-marital sexual experience. It might be noted that a very high proportion of the pre-marital experience of the women in all three groups involved only their *fiancées* just before marriage.

The gulf between profession and practice is part of the situation that an American faces. He must also recognize a curious unwillingness on the part of the Church to deal with this situation in any but the most inept terms. One has to look very hard to come across a defence of pre-marital chastity that is not easy to refute, that has any real power to convince.

Wise as serpents and harmless as doves

Let me say a further introductory word about the narrowing of my concern to the problem of pre-marital chastity. I recognize that all kinds of preliminary problems might be dealt with.

Young people here ask such questions as : Is it permissible to kiss on the first date ? How can I be interesting to a boy and still keep his respect ? And so on. But because "dating", which these questions refer to, is such an incredibly American phenomenon, and because it would be impossible to try to explain or defend it to a non-American, I am going, rather cavalierly, to pass these questions by with a semi-serious remark. I know of but one biblical injunction that can serve as guidance on these "pre-sexual" problems, and that is Jesus' word to be as wise as a serpent and as harmless as a dove. There is perhaps one theological principle to remember as well : all men are sinners, and this means that there is an inevitable tendency for the male member of the man-woman team to affirm himself sexually for the sheer delight of self-assertion. Girls in this country need to remember that this is true even of the most respectable. And I have no theological shame in putting such a noble theological doctrine to such a trivial (it might be said) use. At the same time, certain physical relations between men and women before marriage must be affirmed : affection must be expressed in terms of gesture as well as word. Pleasure in personal relationships is right, and "a Christian date" (to use another Americanism) is not an endless discussion of Kafka or John Foster Dulles or even Ephesians.

An obsolete arsenal

Let me turn to my major point. We are given the principle of pre-marital chastity : that sexual intercourse is appropriately restricted to marriage. Whether this is an historical Christian standard, or one derived mainly from secular sources, is beside the point. It has a strong "Western" flavour, to be sure, but this does not mean we can reject it simply because it may be culturally conditioned. The Church, as far as I can see, has defended it very badly, if at all. Fear of conception and fear of disease have generally been the strongest weapons in its most obsolete arsenal. These are hardly very convincing to the even slightly sophisticated any more ; contraceptive devices that are highly reliable are apparently available to those who want them in almost any situation. So there are many for

whom the word about the "dangers" of disease or conception would be a harmless irrelevance. Is there a word of defence beyond this ? This will try to be a Christian defence ; it will try, at the same time, to learn as much as possible from the medical and psychological descriptions of the sexual act that are available to us today.

The body is good

The first point is a theological one : but it is an obvious one to surprisingly few young people today, however commonplace it has become in theological circles. It is that *for the Christian faith the body and all of its activities are good things*. The body is not the evil part of man, dragging him down ; it is the temple of the Spirit of God, created and redeemed by God, and to be used for His praise and glory. (It has been most interesting to me to see how many non-Christian intellectuals assume that it is the Greek world that affirms the goodness of the whole of life, that the Renaissance tradition extols the goodness of the body, while the Christian-biblical-Reformation tradition, they believe, is the restrictive, dualistic source of our modern difficulties.) Now the goodness of the body needs a careful and understanding defence in the student world today. Too much exists that seems to deny this. Professor Kinsey's figures on the sexual life of religious people seem to indicate that religion means, even within marriage, less frequent sexual practice. I would like to suggest two possible ways of elaborating this first point.

The first is a theological defence, but this ought to be used only when it can be received with understanding. In the whole pattern of Christian doctrine, in the whole sacred story, there seems to be an exaltation of the body, of matter, of physical, historical existence. God looks upon His creation and pronounces it good ; He looks upon the man and the woman He has made, and they are called "very good". Their first sin is "spiritual", not sensual in origin, and even fallen man is to affirm his sexuality as given to him by God. There is a powerful materialistic note in the Old Testament story, both in its psychological speculations (*basar*, flesh, is good, and not the

source of evil in man) and in its eschatological hopes. But even more powerful than the doctrine of creation is the fact of the Incarnation. Here God Himself enters into the human, historical, fleshly world, comes in a real man of flesh and blood, that all men and that the whole man might know His power of redemption. Man's sin is never defined as proceeding from his body. (Paul's view on the special evil residing in the *sarx*, the flesh, has given some historical grounds for a kind of dualism ; but this must be interpreted very carefully. We are able to see now that by "flesh" Paul meant the whole of man apart from God, and if there was a dualism in his thought, it must be described as eschatological and not moral or psychological.) Christians find themselves calling the Church the Body of Christ, partaking of His Body and Blood in the Lord's Supper, and most interestingly of all, speaking of the resurrection of the body. Whatever else this latter phrase means, it suggests that the life of the faithful beyond death is not disembodied or ghostly, but a life in a body, a life with all the activity we know through our bodies here and now, but immeasurably richer, fuller, more complete.

The conception of the body's goodness seems to play a role throughout the whole of the Bible, and in almost every area of theological investigation.

There is a simpler Christian defence of the goodness of the body. We can point, quite simply, to the Gospel accounts of Jesus' life. Look at His lack of asceticism, His delight in the natural, physical world. Look especially at His attitude to the sins of the flesh, typified in His several encounters with prostitutes, and compare this openness, compassion and forgiveness, with His severity to the quite unsensual, quite virtuous Pharisee. I think we can almost say that not only are "sins of the flesh" no more evil than the sins of spiritual pride, but that the so-called fleshly sins (this phraseology is highly questionable, I grant) are even less serious, less damaging, less likely to mean exclusion from the Kingdom of God. Something like a negative proof for our first point, then, can be derived by comparing the attitude of Jesus to the prostitute and to the Pharisee. No special evil resides in the body.

An appropriate symbol of a relationship

The second step in a possible defence of pre-marital chastity might go like this. *Because, for the Christian, the body is good, it is therefore to be used within certain appropriate limits.* Note what this does not say : because the body is evil, a thing to be denied and avoided, it must therefore be used sparingly. It is because of the high status the Christian faith confers on the body that the question of appropriate limits arises. Monogamy is one such limit in the sexual sphere, and in so far as this can be defined as only one wife at a time, it is still fairly respectable in this country. Pre-marital chastity is, however, that "limit" that most needs careful exploration. How is this particular limit to be defended in a convincing way ? How can we, even when we have earnestly been advised by parent, pastor, counsellor, that pre-marital chastity is a "good thing", make this view our own ? In time of temptation, no second-hand, passed-on moral injunction is going to hold.

May I suggest a line of thought that has been helpful to me, from which you may want to begin your own struggle with this question ? Let us look at the act of sexual intercourse itself. From what it is, descriptively, I am going to suggest that it can be *an appropriate symbol* only of a personal relationship that can exist within marriage. This phrase, appropriate symbol, needs a word of explanation. All physical gestures carry a meaning in their very performance, apart from the words we use along with them. If you were to meet someone at a party, just briefly, barely to exchange names, and he (or she) were to see you the next day and throw his (or her) arms about you, you would rightly say this embrace was an inappropriate symbol of your relationship. The gesture said more than the relationship warranted, and you would say it was somehow wrong. If I were to return home after a long absence, and greet my wife on the doorstep with a polite bow and a shake of the hand, this too would be an inappropriate gesture or symbol of our relationship.

Sexual intercourse has a symbolic as well as a procreative function. The act itself expresses something, and the strength of the argument here depends on my describing accurately the

thing that is expressed. Isn't it true that in sexual intercourse we find the most radical possible symbol of self-giving, of mutual trust and interdependence? Do we not find here a poignant reminder of our essential loneliness and incompleteness that can be overcome only by receiving from and giving to another? Do we not find, in sex, that we are able to affirm what it means to be a man, what it means to be a woman, in a unique way? Do we not find that, unless there is an essential humility about the sexual act, unless at all times the other is the centre of meaning and concern, it cannot be an experience at all fulfilling and creative? I should say that these meanings are built into the act of sexual intercourse, whether we want them there or not, and they are somehow expressed even in perfunctory forms of sexuality, when the words spoken do not come anywhere near this level of intimacy. The act itself affirms a trust, dependence, indissoluble oneness. I think Paul suggests this when he declares: "Do you not know that he who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her?" (I Cor. 6 : 16 a).

It is interesting to observe that in a physical encounter between an unmarried man and woman that appears to be moving towards the sexual act the woman will sometimes pause and ask: "But do you really love me?" If the reply is "yes", even when it is not meant, a sort of barrier is felt to be overcome. I suspect that the guilt and feeling of personality disintegration that is experienced, even by the most enlightened libertines, even by those most certain that sexual mores are simply the imposition of a bloodless moralistic culture, can be explained by the fact that promiscuous sexuality actually acts out a lie. It actually says: "I am utterly dependent on you, I completely need and trust you, you alone can complete and fulfil the structure of my life." But the real personal relation is not that, and the promiscuous know this deeply, however skilful their verbal self-justifications. The conventional "if she likes it and if I like it, why shouldn't we?" approach simply ignores what the sexual act does to those who participate in it, above and beyond their willing and intending.

Now I am claiming that the sexual act, thus described, can bear all this meaning without guilt and distortion only within

the sociological structure we call marriage. To be sure, many people "love" one another apart from marriage ; but I have deliberately refrained from calling love a condition of sex, partly because it is a word almost impossible to define, partly because the sexual act seems to symbolize something much deeper than most of the usual definitions of love. The very constituents of the act — mutuality, trust, willingness to give the self utterly and fearlessly to the other — are precisely those things one finds as constituting marriage at its best. Because of this radical thing that the act actually "says", marriage becomes the only place that it can be said and really and utterly meant.

Engagement and marriage

Let me make this clearer by raising an objection to my position. Isn't there a certain amount of mutuality and trust between an engaged man and woman ? Isn't there a willingness of a sort to give the self to the other ? How does your argument speak to the difficult problem of sex and engagement ? This is, I think, an important objection. Is there a difference in the actual relation between engaged and married couples that could justify the sexual relation for the one and not the other ? I think there is a difference ; but it is obviously not a difference of love or affection. But isn't it true that the very elements that are missing in the engagement are precisely those elements of the relation that we found sexual intercourse expressing so profoundly ? The *fiancé* is quite clearly not utterly and totally responsible for his *fiancée*. She is by no means wholly dependent on him. There are still vast areas of decision that are made apart from each other. While their "love" will be the "same" the day before and the day after the wedding, the total and radical character of their mutual dependence comes only with marriage. The awe and shyness of the marriage night, which fiction loves to exploit, and which experience points to in fact, is not purely sexual in nature. Much of it comes from the fact that it is an awful and amazing thing no longer to be one, to be alone. I, me, mine — these no longer have the same meaning.

If these words have any truth to them, then I can continue to maintain that there is a sufficiently real difference between

engagement and marriage to justify my restriction of the sexual act to the latter.

Long engagements

But a word must, indeed, be added to this. The problem of sex and engagement is a particularly acute one in many parts of the West today. For all kinds of reasons, engagements are getting longer and longer. The demands of military service in many places, the extent of graduate and professional studies, the tendency to commit oneself earlier to a life-partner, financial problems, the still-existing (even if diminishing) reluctance on the part of young people to accept support from parents in the early years of marriage — all these things point to a special problem. And when the engaged couple live near one another, the conventional limitations on sex impose a real, serious and difficult strain. For a Christian engaged couple, who find that their self-imposed limitation is injuring their relationship — and this happens often — real honesty and tenderness is required. Professor Seward Hiltner of the University of Chicago has an interesting remark at this point :

Against any possible libertine answer, the Christian view must simply testify to the radical and serious and therefore, in a sense, partly unpredictable nature of sex. But against a legalism that would simply condemn all sex relationships of such people, regardless of context and motive, the Christian view would raise a warning. The general question would be : under some conditions, may sex limited be better than no sex, provided the radical and serious character of sex is not denied ? We need some ethical wrestling with this question.¹

This, I believe, is a very wise remark. It serves to remind the Christian who is seeking to relate his faith to his sexual life that such limitations and disciplines of the latter as he may choose are chosen in order to affirm and not to deny the physical structures of life.

I cannot, as a Christian, discover a train of direct inferences from either doctrine or Scripture that will compel one to come

¹ *Sex Ethics and the Kinsey Reports*, p. 231.

up with the answer of pre-marital chastity. Yet, however ineptly it may be defended today, I think there is a description of the meaning of sex and of the nature of the Christian faith that can make the position an intelligible and creative one. Many other lines of thought could be suggested ; many criticisms of the traditional arguments against pre-marital chastity could be mentioned here.¹ Each of us has to come to his own decision, being very clear that we are struggling with the problem of how to use a good thing — the body — and not trying to find ways of keeping a recalcitrant body, evil in itself, in check.

Physical expression of a felt relationship

As I read over what I have written up to now, I am aware that I may be giving a false impression. In narrowing my concern to the question of pre-marital chastity, I have not intended to brush aside every other form of pre-marital physical relation as either permissible or of no moral concern. It is not completely possible, as a matter of fact, for me to say what is, or is not, permissible for you as a Christian. But we are not wholly without guidance at this point. Two extremes can certainly be avoided : one extreme is the categorical prohibition of "necking" or kissing. When such a prohibition is uttered, it is either treated with good-natured contempt or accepted as the Christian answer, later becoming the cause of unnecessary guilt. It is true that such a prohibition could not be effective. But more important, it shouldn't be effective, because it proceeds from a far too spiritual and uncatholic reading of the Christian tradition.

The other extreme is one that is being seriously entertained by many Christian thinkers of the younger generation today. In reaction against the psychological damage of what can

¹ I might suggest the following question as an example of one of the most difficult-to-meet objections to pre-marital chastity : Analyze and criticize the following statement, "I grant that sex is radical and serious. But if sexual incompatibility is a fairly serious cause of marital difficulty, is it not advisable for an engaged couple, carefully and with their eyes open, to engage in sexual intercourse simply to make certain that a possible future difficulty might be avoided ?"

wrongly be called puritanism, some are beginning to say now that questions of necking and petting (some would add drinking and smoking as well) are of no special moral concern to the Christian. This is a very attractive view in many ways ; it is always pleasing if we can deny the validity of questions we cannot answer. But it will not do. It betrays a lack of psychological insight into the way in which innocent forms of sex-play can often lead into other things.

Let me draw together some of the things from this essay that can serve as a rough guide here, fully aware that each of you in your different traditions will have to come to your own decisions. I think that the idea of sexual intercourse as an appropriate symbol is useful here. Can we not say that if pleasure is a good thing, and if a physical expression of a personal relationship is a good thing, then one way to keep our man-woman relations honest is to say that the physical gesture may never too far exceed the actual quality of the felt relationship ? Now this may not be much help, for one of the acute problems is often : what do I really feel about him ? Am I — we ask — in love ? The nature of the relationship may be an unknown thing, not the known standard, and thus, you may say, you cannot decide on the appropriate physical expression on the basis of the very thing that is unknown. And further to complicate matters, one of the possible ways in which we discover just what is our attitude to the man, the woman, is to kiss her (or allow ourselves to be kissed by him) and then to notice our response.

This is about the best I can do on guidance on specific matters. When intercourse is not a temptation, and when you are concerned to bring your social and personal life under the Lordship of Christ, you will do best if you proceed with a certain amount of amused distrust of both yourself and the "other". You will avoid solemnity, and avoid also the easy extremes of unqualified acceptance or unqualified rejection of kissing and all the rest. Let what you do — the physical expressions you allow yourself — be as honest descriptions of what you feel as you can make them.

Forgiveness

A final postscript. Too often Christians have made the defence of chastity their only relevant word to the sexual life. This is a necessary word, and one can be given a good conscience about deciding for chastity. But if we limit our word to a defence of chastity, a Christian observer soon comes to see that he is limiting his word to fewer and fewer men and women of university age. The facts seem quite clear ; we in this country are in a situation in which fewer and fewer students are prepared to hear a defence of chastity. They are less and less likely to be sexually uncommitted. All that a convincing defence of chastity can do for these is to drive them into despair, and increase their guilt. This reminds us that the word of chastity is not the last, or even the deepest, Christian word to our sexual crisis. The Christian has a word for the chaste ; he also, let it be said, has a word for the promiscuous. It is a dangerous word, and a word that might to some seem to undercut the word of chastity that he also must speak. This, of course, is the word of forgiveness.

The question has been, "How far can we go ?" The answer has been fairly simple. The elements of pleasure and physical expression must be affirmed in the man-woman relation. But there are appropriate forms to that relation, and the sexual act seems appropriately limited to marriage, in that it expresses a personal relation to which marriage alone can give a meaningful structure. The outer act cannot belie the inner attitude ; when it does, the whole personality begins to get distorted and broken. But there is a deeper question than the one of our title. It is this. What can I do when I have gone further than I want to go, than I know I should have gone ? The Christian Gospel of forgiveness is no magic pill for this situation ; but it is the centre of it, and without it guilt and distortion can neither be adequately diagnosed nor radically cured.

Homosexuality

D. S. BAILEY

Homosexuality is a *personal sexual condition* characterized by a specific emotional and physico-sexual propensity towards others of the *same* sex ; as such, it stands in contrast to *heterosexuality*, which is a like condition in which the propensity of the subject is towards members of the *complementary* sex. Heterosexuality is the natural and normal state of the mature human being, and homosexuality is abnormal and comparatively uncommon — though the ratio of the one to the other cannot be ascertained accurately, and may vary according to social conditions and individual circumstances.

Condition and conduct

It is of the utmost importance to distinguish at the outset between the homosexual *condition* and homosexual *acts*, and to bear the distinction constantly in mind — the more so, as both in common parlance and in scientific, medical and theological usage “homosexuality” is frequently and incorrectly employed to denote a kind of conduct. Unfortunately there is no comprehensive term to describe homosexual acts, though there are legal or other technical expressions for certain specific homosexual acts. It is no less important to recognize that homosexuality is not only a male phenomenon and a male problem. The homosexual condition is found no less among women than among men — though naturally it has its characteristic feminine aspects ; and women as well as men engage in homosexual practices.

Just as the personal sexual condition may be heterosexual or homosexual, so may be an individual's physico-sexual conduct. But the two cannot always be directly correlated, for condition is not invariably the determinant of behaviour. Statistical research confirms the evidence of history and of anthropology,

that men and women can be remarkably versatile, adaptable and adventurous in their sexual practice, when social custom permits or encourages experiment, or when the sanctions of morality, law and religion lose their restraining power. Thus not a few persons exhibit a complex and *ambisexual* pattern of sexual conduct in which there occur deviations from the behaviour appropriate to their basic condition; the heterosexual will engage in homosexual acts, and the homosexual in normal coitus. On the other hand, in most cases conduct will be appropriate to condition.

But the existence of this ambisexual pattern of behaviour in certain individuals has led to the postulation of a so-called "bisexual" condition. This, however, appears to be an unwarranted inference from observed conduct, which would only be valid if human beings invariably acted true to their sexual condition — which is by no means always the case. Anyway, "bisexual" is hardly an accurate term to use in this connection; the fact seems to be that persons are either heterosexual (in most cases) or homosexual (in a few cases) in condition, but that some, for one reason or another, may regularly or occasionally be ambisexual in behaviour.

It is no exaggeration to say that too much attention has been given to homosexual acts, and far too little attention to the homosexual condition; and that the existence of what may be called a homosexual (as distinct from a heterosexual) *attitude to life* has been virtually ignored. Much study needs to be given to this question, since homosexual acts play by no means a preponderant part in the lives of many inverts. To assess the problem of homosexuality almost exclusively in terms of behaviour is as misleading as would be a similar treatment of heterosexuality. In each case it is the total attitude to life that matters, and in relation to this the invert's conduct must be reviewed.

Causes and "cure"

What causes homosexuality? We do not know with any certainty, and much research and observation will be necessary before any conclusion can be reached. In some persons the

condition may be constitutional, and may arise from hormonal defects or unbalance, but in very many cases it seems to be environmental in origin. Case histories frequently suggest a psychological cause — and, in particular, that of unsatisfactory emotional adjustment in childhood due to an unhappy home, a faulty parent-child relationship, or the disruption of the family by divorce, death or separation. It will be evident that many of the social evils of our time are, in fact, responsible for this distressing condition — that the invert is often, apparently, the product of war, marital failure, divorce and insecurity.

The experts are divided on the question of a "cure" for homosexuality. Some claim that the homosexual can be heterosexualized by suitable therapy, but it must be admitted that at present there is little to encourage the view that inversion is reversible. Sometimes what appears to be homosexuality proves to be simply arrested emotional development, and in such cases skilled treatment can aid the subject to attain maturity — but no "cure" of inversion will have occurred, for inversion proper did not exist. No doubt there is some hope when a latent state of inversion is detected in the child or even in the young adolescent ; but most cases reach the consulting room in a fixed, adult stage. Nor is treatment itself always easy, for successful therapy demands the willing cooperation of the patient, and the true homosexual may find the idea of a "cure" no less distasteful or abhorrent than would the normal person the suggestion that he or she should be homosexualized. All the indications are that the homosexual can best be helped, not by promises of a "cure", but by assistance in attaining a full adjustment to life in spite of a grave handicap.

Legal aspects

To homosexuality there is, of course, a legal as well as a psychological side. It is not a crime to be homosexual, but homosexual acts between males have generally been penalized heavily by law — especially in the societies which have derived their attitudes from Hebrew and Roman sources. But there are considerable variations in practice — thus, while British

and American law is severe, that of many Continental lands is more lenient. It would be impossible here to summarize the legal position in Europe and the United States, but broadly speaking the situation is that those countries which incline to a liberal view do not penalize the private practices of adult consenting males, but only punish offences against youth and against public decency and order; whereas in Britain, for example, all homosexual acts done by males, whether in public or in private, are treated as criminal, while sodomy is regarded as specially serious. At present a government committee is investigating the matter, and both in Britain and in America there is a body of informed and responsible opinion which advocates an amendment of the law so as to exclude all homosexual acts other than those involving young persons, those committed with violence or under duress, and those which constitute public nuisance and indecency — including, of course, procuration and prostitution. It is a remarkable anomaly that, although male homosexual practices have always been penalized with more or less severity, female homosexual practices (lesbianism, tribadism) have been virtually ignored. There would seem to be no reason why this discrimination should be allowed to persist to the advantage of women, especially as neither morality nor the good of society warrant it.

Scriptural references

To understand the attitude of Western society to homosexual practices, we must refer to Scripture, and to the legal systems of antiquity. Perhaps the strongest influence of all upon the traditional attitude has been the story of the destruction of Sodom, which has for long been interpreted as a divine act of vengeance upon homosexual behaviour. But it is doubtful whether this ancient story is relevant to the matter. Certainly the Bible itself (apart from one late New Testament passage and its derivative) never directly associates Sodom with homosexual acts, nor does it enforce its condemnations of such acts by any allusion to the destruction of the Cities of the Plain. The sin of Sodom, in Hebrew tradition, is that of inhospitality, arrogance and wickedness in general. There is evidence,

however, that during the period of the Hellenistic domination of Israel a reinterpretation of the Sodom story took place at the hands of patriotic and rigorist Pharisees, in which the sin of Sodom was restated in terms of the characteristic Greek vice of *paidophthoria* (corruption of boys) and homosexual practices in general. This development can be traced in the Pseudepigrapha, and thence undoubtedly influenced Christian thought — the allusions to Sodom in terms of homosexual imputation, which are found in Jude 6-7 (and were borrowed by II Pet. 2: 6-8), are clearly indebted to a passage in the *Testament of Naphtali*.

An examination of the Sodom story shows that the homosexual interpretation depends upon taking the verb "to know" (Gen. 19: 5) in a coital sense; but the objections to its having that sense here are that the coital use of the verb is comparatively rare and generally qualified (as in Gen. 19: 8 — "which have not *known man*..."), that when employed coitally the verb always refers to heterosexual relationships (indeed, "coital knowledge" is only possible where the two complementary sexes are involved in the act), and that the story can be explained no less convincingly in a non-sexual sense. Thus the demand to "know" the strangers is, on the alternative view, simply a demand to have them produced for recognizance and approval. The story of the outrage at Gibeah in Judges 19 is clearly derived from the Sodom story, and cannot be taken as independent evidence for the use of "know" in a coital and homosexual sense.

But the Bible contains several condemnations of homosexual practices. In the Old Testament they are penalized by death (Lev. 18: 22 and 20: 13). In the New Testament St. Paul denounces both men and women who engage in such acts (Rom. 1: 26-27) and declares that sodomites and catamites shall not inherit the Kingdom of God (I Cor. 6: 9-10), while the author of the Pastorals holds that it is the province of the civil power to punish sodomites (I Tim. 1: 9-10). While there are critical problems of detail in these passages, there can be no doubt as to the general attitude of the Bible. But one point needs to be stressed. The words employed in the New Testament show clearly that its condemnations are directed against those

whom we would call perverts — that is to say, vicious heterosexuals indulging in homosexual acts, or men acting as prostitutes; in other words, the New Testament denounces the depraved catamites and paederasts of the *Satyricon*. But can these passages be applied also to something about which the ancient world apparently knew nothing — the acts of the genuine invert regarded as expressions of homosexual love? It may be said that while the Bible condemns vice, it hardly shows clearly what attitude the Christian ought to adopt to acts which many homosexuals would attempt to equate with the coitus between a man and a woman which expresses their love.

Moral assessment of homosexual acts

To make a moral assessment of homosexual practices of this kind, we must employ the methods and principles of moral theology, and must examine the objective morality of such acts. This involves our asking whether they conform to the will and purpose of God for human sexuality, as apprehended through revelation, intuition and the exercise of the rational faculties. The purpose of coitus may be described as twofold — conceptional and relational (the initiation and consolidation of the “one flesh” *henosis* through the development and enrichment of the common life of the couple); and these must always be held together in principle — which does not preclude the right to decide conscientiously whether any one specific act of coitus shall or shall not be conceptional. Not only must these two purposes of coitus be held together, but it must be recognized that there are two unique creative functions which the sexual organs discharge, and which limit their use for both conception and relation. First, these organs are the means whereby the “one flesh” union is established, and second, they are the means whereby procreation occurs. This necessitates confining the use of these organs within the bounds of an exclusive and lifelong relationship — that is to say, within marriage.

Right reason, then, would suggest that the use of the sexual organs is proper only within the context of a personal relation which is both heterosexual and specifically marital — and that

homosexual acts, therefore, are contrary to the will of God and sinful *per se*. Against this conclusion, however, the invert will sometimes argue that such acts are "natural" in his case, and ought not to be regarded as sinful. But this contention is based on confusion as to the meaning of "natural", for an act may be *congruous* to a person's sexual condition, and yet unnatural because the condition is itself strictly speaking unnatural.

More often, however, the invert will claim that, for him, homosexual acts are relational just as heterosexual acts are — that they are a means of expressing love. But the sexual organs are only for the expression of a special kind of love which is *sui generis* — the love between man and woman which seeks fulfilment in union as "one flesh", in the creation of the common life of marriage, and in the building of a family. No homosexual "love", however noble, can be equated with this unique experience to which the act of coitus belongs; therefore we must conclude that not even the affectionate attachment between two members of the same sex can justify their engaging in sexual acts.

In assessing the morality of homosexual acts, it is important to distinguish between their objective moral character and the culpability of the agent. There can be no doubt that the homosexual ordinarily acts freely, and not under any internal compulsion, and that he or she is therefore responsible for what is done. But there are often cases where an act may be intrinsically wrong, and yet the agent may either be unaware of the fact, or else incapable of conviction. This unawareness or incapacity is technically called "ignorance", and if it cannot be dispelled by reasonable means, it is termed "invincible ignorance". A person in such a state of "ignorance" may sin, and yet not be blameworthy, having acted conscientiously but in error. Thus there may be cases (and the question can only be considered in particular, and not general, terms) where a homosexual engages in acts with one of his own sex, firmly convinced that such acts are permissible because they are expressions of love; and the casuist may conclude that such cases are ones of genuine "ignorance" in which the person concerned is not to be treated as blameworthy. But that is

for the casuist to decide ; an invert cannot simply say, "I am 'invincibly ignorant' and therefore blameless in the matter" — that is not a question for subjective judgment.

Briefly, we may say then that all homosexual acts are intrinsically sinful ; that almost all homosexual acts are free and morally assessable ; and that for most specific homosexual acts the person concerned will be blameworthy : but that there may occasionally occur cases where a genuine "ignorance" makes it impossible to regard the agent as culpable for the sin he has committed. Such cases, however, may well be rare ; generally speaking, homosexual practices must be treated as both sinful and blameworthy.

It should be recognized, however, that because an act is sinful and imputable, it is not necessarily criminal. It seems now to be a general principle that the state should take no cognizance of private sexual sin ; hence it does not normally (except in certain states of the United States, where a puritanical view of sex morality has persisted) penalize adultery and fornication — experience has shown that such punitive action is generally futile and creates instead of removes abuses. That is why many now consider that sexual sins should only be punished by the state when they involve the young, or are committed with violence and fraud, or constitute public nuisance or indecency.

Social problem of homosexuality

Homosexuality, however, presents greater problems than those which arise from the commission of homosexual sins and offences. The genuine homosexual is a handicapped person who, nevertheless, has his or her contribution to make to the life of society — and it can be a valuable contribution. The social problem of homosexuality is not least that of assisting the homosexual to overcome his handicap and to attain a more or less satisfactory adjustment to life. This task calls for great understanding and patience. The invert needs good friends and opportunities to share in the family life which he can never have for his own. He needs help and sympathy in fitting him usefully into society, and especially in affording him the chance

to do the sort of work which his temperament best fits him to do. This can never happen so long as the nature of homosexuality is misunderstood — so long as the invert is treated, not as a handicapped person, but as a depraved and depraving individual. The Christian Church has a great opportunity and task here, first in understanding the homosexual, then in aiding him to accept himself and his life, and to deal with the very real problem of his physical desires and their control, and finally in ensuring that he is enabled to make his own distinctive positive contribution to the life of society.

The problem in the university

Finally, a few words about the problem of homosexuality as it may arise in the university or college. Let us consider first the case of the person who thinks that he or she is homosexual. It is necessary above all for such a person to realize that this condition is in itself entirely amoral, and does not in any sense imply a depraved or perverse nature. If it proves to be settled and intractable to treatment, it will, of course, represent a handicap which is carried through life — but it should be realized that it is in itself no greater handicap than others which people have surmounted by the aid of the grace of God, and their own effort. But a person who thinks that he is homosexual should not assume that this is the case until he has taken expert advice. It may be, as I have already suggested, that his feelings are simply an indication of an emotional immaturity, in which case skilled treatment will usually enable him to attain a normal adjustment to life. Even the true invert, if he takes advice on first becoming aware of his condition, may be greatly helped by psychiatric treatment. The first thing, therefore, in all cases of suspected inversion is that the person in question should immediately see either a Christian psychiatrist or one who is at least in sympathy with the attitude to life of the Christian.

Sometimes the homosexual impulses which are experienced may not be particularly strong or specifically directed, but if they are, it will naturally be wise to avoid all occasion of temptation or strain. With this caution in mind, however, it will

generally be found helpful not to dwell upon the problem itself, and in particular not to shun the social life of the university or college. The more a person who is troubled by the possibility of being an invert can enter into the life of the student community, the more easily will he or she find it possible to accept this handicap.

Responsibility of the S.C.M.

But this in its turn imposes obligations upon the student community, and constitutes a particular challenge to a religious society. The homosexual has to fight, not only temptation, but loneliness too, and with it fear and self-pity. These, and not homosexual practices, may well be the real temptation. It is, therefore, the task of the Christian student community to help the invert both to lose himself and to find himself — to lose the negative self associated with his handicap, and to find his true self in and through Christian help and friendship. Wise and sympathetic companionship can mean a very great deal to the invert — and from time to time he will want someone in whom he can confide with the assurance that he will find both understanding and confidence.

All efforts to help the homosexual, however well meaning, will nevertheless fail in their purpose if they are undertaken too earnestly or self-consciously. Nothing is more likely to embarrass or frighten away the student who feels that he is being treated as “a case” — indeed, he will value nothing so much as being treated as a perfectly ordinary person. In the end there can be no rules for the assistance of the homosexual ; he needs most what the Christian community alone can give him in its fullness — the love of Christ Himself, expressed through the members of His Body.

Further reading

This account of a great personal and social problem has necessarily been very brief, and is incomplete at many points ; I can only hope that it has been useful, and not misleading in its brevity. There is comparatively little literature on the

subject as yet, but there are a few books that are worth study. Havelock Ellis's pioneer work, volume II in his *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, entitled *Sexual Inversion*, contains a full exploration of the question as it confronted the student fifty years ago. Since then, the matter attracted little attention until the recent revival of interest, when several books have appeared. G. Westwood, *Society and the Homosexual* (Gollancz), is a popular treatment which is favourable to the invert and critical of the British law. D. W. Cory, *The Homosexual Outlook* (Nevill), is a subjective study set in an American context, which contains some special pleading, but also indicates something of the attitude of the average amoral invert. For the medical and psychological facts, D. J. West, *Homosexuality* (Duckworth), is excellent. Finally, may I suggest that my own book, *Homosexuality and the Western Christian Tradition* (Longmans), should be read for an examination of the biblical material, the treatment of homosexual practices in Roman and Canon law, and in church legislation and tradition, and for an assessment of the sociological factors underlying the present attitude of society. It contains full references, and a critical examination of much of the existing literature where that attacks the Christian view of the subject. Among forthcoming works may be mentioned *They Stand Apart* (Heinemann), containing studies in the medical, comparative legal, and social aspects of homosexuality, and an essay by me dealing more fully than was possible in this article with the moral aspect. Another important publication to await is the evidence presented to the Government Committee on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution by the Church of England Moral Welfare Council, which will contain discussions of the whole question from the theological and moral angles.

The Temptations of Modern Views of Sex in the West

ANDRÉ DUMAS

A Western journalist, invited to go and admire democratic China or a Caucasian republic, will, on his return, always begin by expressing his astonishment at their chastity, as if the absence of kissing in the parks of culture had surprised him far more than Lenin's tomb or the giant combines. From time to time we are, of course, told that the cocktail bar on Gorky Street in Moscow was the hang-out of a gilded and night-loving crowd of youth, but also we know that it was closed and replaced by a tea-room. In his economic report to the Party Congress in 1952, Mikoyan announced that the production of aperitifs was being developed, and justified this by saying that it answered a normal need, which can now be met, to have something more than the bare necessities. Nevertheless, the officials of the regime still refrain from smoking. At the recent Festival of Venice, under cover of Tchekov's name, was shown the first film in which the popular democracies touch the subject of adultery. Yet the Moscow literary reviews still officially take to task writers who don't take marriage seriously, and the Soviet plays of 1920 about free love find production in Paris rather than in Moscow. Thus it seems that the East is just as bent on airing its moralistic fictions as the West is on parading its moral defections.

For on our side, movies and newspapers, novels and theatres are clearly hypersexualized. The ten post-war years seem not yet to have exhausted this highly profitable vein. Starting with my own country, how can we deny what a certain movie critic has called the "Carolization of France?"¹ Scenario

¹ Neologism concocted by André Bazin from the name and the best known of the films of the French movie star, Martine Carol, noted for the generous display of her charms in "Caroline Chérie".

writers and well-known men of letters harness their fame to the task of reconstituting the *Belle Epoque*, meaning by that the joys of the flesh during the Renaissance or the eighteenth century or in the Paris of the 1900's. In Italy a still greater gamut extends from the grandiose spectacles of the Roman Empire to the neo-realistic dramas of Naples or Sicily. Nevertheless, the methods used to draw in the public are similar, and film stars are freely swapped. England seems a bit backward in this charm competition, but Scandinavia, with its adolescent loves anatomized, and above all the United States, land of Caldwell's frank sensualism and Faulkner's sombre passion, to say nothing of the somewhat tart triumphs of Rita Hayworth or Marilyn Monroe, both serve to confirm the judgment of the East on the moral putrefaction in the West.

Thus puritanism has found refuge among the adversaries of bourgeois morality, while the "free world" freely parades its worldliness. Could this mean that hypocrisy has emigrated to the collective dictatorships, while liberty has found the courage to face its corruption? Or could it mean that the world of the individual is breaking up, while that of the masses is finding its balance? Before we thus make of sexual morality a political propaganda argument side by side with economics and religion, we should clarify the Western crises in the relationships between man and woman, just as we should undoubtedly, when we get the necessary data, probe deeply to find what is true behind the rigorous virtue of the Eastern world ¹.

Sexuality and revolt

The man whose name has been given to a segment of modern eroticism, the Marquis de Sade, spent twenty-seven years of his life in prison. He used to imagine terrible fortified castles in

¹ A number of quite recent Soviet novels, after the simple virtues of cement and tractors, begin anew to deal with the complexities of sentimental relations. In *The Harvest* we see a perfect communist who is a bad husband. In *The Thaw* (what a significant title!), the latest work of Ilya Ehrenbourg, we are shown a married couple who bore each other to death, as well as a Soviet heroine exasperated at "suffering the pangs of love like the women in the old novels, those who had nothing to do", meaning those who didn't yet have work as the security for an always positive and always successful love.

which he would be holding at his mercy the women who were the objects of his desire, doubtless because he himself was thwarted during his whole life, first by the royalists of the old regime, then by the revolutionaries of 1789. Without going to such an extreme correlation between theories asserted and lives endured, we can at least emphasize how often in the West the clamour for sexual liberty has been raised as a reaction against the sense of being socially stifled. Above all, it has burst out from the bosom of societies that were puritan and Anglo-Saxon (Lawrence, Miller), or patriarchal and Latin (García Lorca, César Pavèse), as if the fetters of the world about them, even more than the direct force of desire, supplied it with violence and invention. Sexuality thus frequently becomes a sort of primitive and anti-social explosive, of a sort that the individual can use to jeer at the rules, to do violence to his neighbour, to affirm himself when the public world seems to be denying or forgetting him. It begins, then, rather as a weapon of warfare than a gesture of love. It is satisfied with brief encounters, because in them it seeks far more for a way to bolster the self than selflessly to discover others. It is a cry wrung from the desperation of living, bent on making it even more desperate, to the point where even sexual accomplishment affords no satisfaction. It is neither a frankly pagan sensuality unaware of law, as during the Renaissance, nor a deft and dainty bantering in eighteenth-century style, but rather a sort of sickness, in which highly evolved individuals, through their heroes or their primitive acts, dream of finding again an original force able to renew them, while in fact they merely go round and round, victims of the disgust they feel for the world and for themselves.

How many films and novels there are which have thus linked sexuality and the rejection of established society, a rejection first effectuated by men (the thug, the criminal), later by women as well (the vamp, the street-walker), a sexuality in which neither joy, nor tenderness nor permanence is to be found, but a brazenly flaunted maladaptation, something like the bombs of the Russian nihilists of the beginning of the century, or like the scandals of the surrealists after the war of 1918! These themes have been exploited in literature and

art. But we would be wrong if we saw in them merely a provocative fiction. It is true that many young people have taken the position of hating the family and mocking love, because they fancied themselves to be social revolutionaries. In other words, they told themselves that it was impossible to share a durable love in the midst of a world that they would like to see disappear. The crime novel seeks systematically to prove that love never leads to happiness. You either slide by in life with an immense lassitude, or you are wiped out by some fatal mishap. You have to wise up to this ahead of time while you are still young, rather than be driven to admit it at the end of your days. Only in some such stark frame of mind can you find a fierce gaiety, coldly appraised and interspersed here and there by perfect moments no sooner found than lost.

At this point, after tracing its root of violence, we come upon the tender and romantic fibre of sexuality in revolt. For it is romanticism that we find circulating throughout France with the poetry of Prevert or the films of Carné and Clouzot. No longer is it, as in the nineteenth century, the romanticism of unrecognized passion, the couple kept apart by some practically insurmountable obstacle having nothing to do with their love (the other already married, or their social ranks too disparate, or a great difference in age, etc.) ; now it is the romanticism of a condemned existence, of the solitary being who knows beforehand that he must leave, must die, must lose this joy, though it is within reach, and perhaps even because he knows himself to be incapable of making the other happy.

Thus we have swung full circle : free love asserted in defiance of social conventions, and now itself become a myth, all the more unsure of being able to realize itself as these conventions crumble about it. Everything happens as if the Marquis de Sade had been given his full liberty and had only then perceived that the barriers to fulfilment were not external but within his very being.

I believe that the vogue of sexuality in revolt has, by now, virtually worn itself out. Already anarchists in politics and surrealists in poetry are becoming extinct. There are fewer and fewer apologists for free love, and the films which carry on the tradition of stark romanticism date, as we know, from

before the war. And in this domain the individual rebel has been swamped in the immensity of collective hopes and terrors arising out of social changes and out of the great wars. An inquiry conducted in France among the student youth on the subject of marriage, brings out, contrary to expectation, that the bohemian life has burned itself out. Marriage, paradoxically enough, rates higher with today's youth than it has done in the past century. In Germany, an important study put out under the auspices of the *Akademie für Gemeinwirtschaft* of Hamburg, on "Changes in the Contemporary German Family", likewise concludes that family bonds are far tighter in the Bonn Republic than in that of Weimar. In spite of the appalling shocks of war, the scrambling of classes, regions and faiths, the scantiness of housing, in sum, the bitterness and tension from overwork, there are fewer divorces than formerly.

Does this mean that the great individualistic crisis of sexuality in revolt (against society, the family, and ultimately love itself as a way to felicity) can have destroyed itself by its own excesses or succumbed under the weight of the vast needs of collective living? Should we consider the sexual exaggerations still to be found in printed matter and photos as an outmoded provocation, already powerless to affect current morality and destined to peter out little by little? Before answering, let us dig still deeper.

Sexuality and statistics

After the crushing pressures of the great social upheavals which make individual revolt ridiculous, certainly the newest tools contemporary man has developed to fit the erotic into the category of harmless things have been statistical inquiries. In this field there is but one outstanding name — Dr. Kinsey. But hordes of imitators publish their findings in innumerable digests for medicine, psychoanalysis, psychology, even women's fashions, obtaining their data from periodical questionnaires.

Does this percentage tabulation of the most intimate life of men and women perturb morality by showing how general are certain forbidden practices and condemned anomalies? For example, Simone de Beauvoir, in *The Second Sex*, cites statistics

showing that there are today in France as many illegal abortions as there are childbirths. In *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*, Dr. Kinsey brings out that half of the 5,940 women questioned had had sexual experiences before marriage and that twenty-five per cent had been faithless after marriage. After that, why should one be ashamed, having so many others secretly for company? Why suffer torments when every magazine can supply you with an abundance of information on frigidity, impotence, masturbation or homosexuality?

It is hard to prove that this sexual publicity has increased the percentage of immorality. Its practitioners shield themselves behind the dignity of the scientist, observing without judging, and issuing laboratory studies in the coldest objectivity. Moreover, the danger does not appear to be clearly seen by all, for we find even moralistic organizations adopting this new method of investigating and expounding sexual life. In Sweden and Denmark they make medical films on fecundation, the various methods of childbearing, or venereal diseases, prefacing them with moral counsels, sometimes religious counsels, with the aim of freeing men and women from ignorance and "false shame" that lead to lying and calamities. Such information, made available to all, may help the human being to know what he is doing when he comes up against sexual life. Henceforth it will be less possible for adult physical relations to take place between individuals who are still psychologically children. The goal is excellent. By scanning Dr. Kinsey's tables, we learn the typical difficulties harassing our contemporaries in their sexual life, and even the personal resources they summon up to cope with them. Sexology thus becomes akin to popular political economy intended to teach the citizenry where effort should be applied to bring up a given backward sector: if you make public the average income of a native population under colonial mandate as compared to the average income of the colonists, you will deflate the defenders of colonialism.

Unfortunately this analogy is precisely what is disturbing. For it is not the habit of readers of economic statistics to link these to their total pattern of behaviour. If they feel they can line up their personal ideas on the same side, they will willingly remember a detail. But if they sense that they might have

to change their ways of life to do so, all will be forgotten. Statistics, with their pretensions to scientific objectivity, remain utterly alien to them. Out of mental laziness an over-all picture is obtained which could only connect their individual responsibility with dehumanized averages. Thus the simplification of human problems into figures and diagrams, as well as their fragmentation in a series of abstractly isolated reports, might lead us to believe that a perfected sexual technique was being created, a hygienically and morally model home life, whereas all we have before us is the quite average current experience of individuals, each as crushed as the other by their typical difficulties. Sexology, teaching us how things are, lets us feel they are pretty much as they ought to be.

Far from exciting immorality, these statistics tend rather to reduce the moral choice to the measurable behaviour of the higher mammals. Their danger is not that they open wide the gateway to excess, but that they submerge responsibility in a compromise: not asceticism, not licence, not suppression, not free love, merely an average frequency such as circumstances have brought about as the practice of the social aggregate. *Abbau der Erotik*, that is, the destruction of the erotic, as the German researchers already cited put it, such is indubitably the end result of the abortive anarchism of "tough guy" love, as well as of the scientific sexology of standard love.

Sexuality and the meeting of the couple

Nevertheless, few epochs have insisted as much as ours upon the relation of men and women as a source of individual enrichment and social balance. Theologies of the image of the trinitarian God reflected in the essential duality of the sexes, philosophies of the determination of the being by its meetings with others, psychologies of the masculine and feminine elements complementing each other in each individual, pedagogies of educating boys and girls together, and sociologies of civilizations giving full opportunity to each sex — all these doctrinal movements ought to tie in with a profound experience of the present-day world.

Clearly this great new fact is the coming together of men and women. Bearing up under the same social struggles and

national upheavals, sharing the same jobs and already entered into a similar division of private responsibilities and public duties, the two sexes more and more see how close they have come together and how they resemble each other. The figures and faces of women tend towards a masculine slenderness and sportiness, while men's fashions tend towards the feminine in colour and design. The eternal feminine and the pride of the virile male dwindle together. The hierarchies that separated men and women are gradually crumbling, bringing about, it is true, a visible disorder (divorces facilitated by differences in salaries, refusals to defer to each other, as living together requires), but above all allowing to develop an invisible and profound fraternity between those who formerly kept within their own domains and evidenced a lot of mutual respect, perhaps because of their mutual distance and ignorance.

In this renewed life of the couple within the younger generation, what role does sexuality play? Here neither the stark novel nor statistics can give us worth-while information. We must stick with more direct impressions. I think today's young couples are quite aware of the importance of sexual life in unifying them. How could they fail to be? Contemporary theology has joined the anti-puritan reaction in affirming that the spirit is not separate from the flesh, that man is one, that there is no sublimation of eroticism that is harmless, in short, that sensual harmony is quite as important as sentimental harmony.

I would rather be inclined to feel that these well-indoctrinated young couples do not sufficiently know that, in spite of appearances, bodies take quite as long to achieve harmony as hearts do, and how false it is, therefore, to count on rapidity of the physical to make up for deficiencies of an emotional or intellectual order. The risk is no longer that sexuality will be neglected or be degraded into smuttiness, and thus earmarked for the suppressions so often described. On the contrary, the risk is that between man and women an over-simple sexuality will be conceived, easy and always salutary, in short, one that transposes the general coming together of the sexes to the plane of their physical relations. Then it could be that the man, being more instinctively immediate, would believe he was

achieving a truly reciprocal meeting, while the woman would remain a stranger to the joy of a rhythmic sexuality in which she did not fully participate.

In the old days, men and women knew they were quite different. Between them sexuality could take two directions: 1) either it accentuated the incurable aspects of this difference — the man alone dealt in possession and conquest, the woman alone in abandon and defeat. This very frightful choice of words showed how little they tended in such a case towards the sharing of happiness, and how often sex was merely a burden upon wives who submitted to the baser instincts of their respectable husbands because this was what inevitably went along with the joys of maternity, at the same time as it fell under the heading of conjugal duty; 2) or the man and the woman, properly conscious of their great divergencies in feelings as in occupations, took great pains to rejoin and to satisfy each other. They carried on a lengthy courtship, and the recognized tact in the domain of sentiments was carried through into an equally sustained attentiveness in the sexual domain.

Abusive simplification of sexuality

Today men and women find themselves close together. Sex is, therefore, freed from the pretentious demands of the man as from the resigned sufferance of the woman. But has this led it to flower? Do young men and women of today's generation sufficiently understand that sexual life requires as much delicacy and stick-to-it-iveness as psychological life? Does sexology teach the primary importance of tenderness for the woman, and the taking of time (which does not mean holding back) for the man? An excellent "technique" means almost nothing in this field, for a little physical clumsiness is much less grave than a love lacking in quality. A reciprocal joy is what must be sought in this communion of the bodies; and statistics which add up the frequency, the marital or extra-marital legitimacy, of sex relations are revealed to be singularly meagre when consulted about their emotional value.

The danger, therefore, is scarcely any longer puritanism, but the abusive simplification of sexuality. Too often the

co-presence of two independent, equal solitaires has taken the place of the former hierarchy of the man as leader and the woman as led. But there has been no growth in the forming of the couple. The proper line of thought to pursue in a Christian environment is no longer the anachronistic attack against the evils of spiritualism, but an introduction to the profound rhythm of physical joy as experienced by men or by women.

We should say of this joy that it is one of those things which are given "in addition" (Matthew 6 : 33), once each partner has striven to share, and sometimes first of all to contribute to his mate within the other domains apparently less pertinent, more apart than the analysis of sentiments — the exchange of plans and regrets secretly held. There are sometimes exceptions to this. At one point, sexual understanding will precede, and at another point it will follow, the communion of the personalities¹. In any case, it has a life of its own, just as complex and just as fresh each day as the emotional life. No past success guarantees it. No obstacle definitely bars it.

The verses of the Gospel have a clear bearing on our search : "Your eye is the lamp of your body ; when your eye is sound, your whole body is full of light ; but when it is not sound, your body is full of darkness. Therefore be careful lest the light in you be darkness. If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, it will be wholly bright, as when a lamp with its rays gives you light" (Luke 11 : 34-36). Now in this parable the eye of the body is the emotional, intellectual and active life of men and women lighting up or darkening their physical life.

In sum, sex-love harboured no illusions with respect to the loneliness of humans in spite of all their physical excesses. Sexology feels it can solve everything by a technique of giving details on the quantity, though not the quality, of sexual relations. The anti-puritanism of contemporary theology

¹ In one of the most remarkable modern novels studying the evolution of marriage in the younger generation as compared with its parents, *Le Cahier Interdit*, by the Italian author, Alba de Cespedes, we see a rather good sexual understanding survive the total divorce of minds, and in the Mexican film, *Salt of the Earth*, an admirable portrayal of the emancipation of woman by work, the new relationship in the social contract of the husband and wife reveals to them their reciprocal sexual joy.

actually does point out the influence of the body on the soul, but from the very first fails to show sufficiently how sexuality is just as complex, variable and influenced by man as is psychology. However, life today, bringing men and women ever closer together, should favour a sexuality designed for better understanding and mutual adjustment.

Contemporary testimony is negative at this point. Thus the latest novel of Simone de Beauvoir, *The Mandarins*, which many have felt to be immoral and harsh, sets forth the utter failure of sexual experiences not integrated into a life of sharing on the other levels. The heroine, Anne, an independent and wilful woman, finds no joy whatsoever in a compulsive sampling of cold sexuality. She fails likewise to find the durable happiness that a tested devotion might give her because she will put only a part of her life into it. Her daughter, Nadine, typical of the sexually-disoriented post-war youth, seeks vainly in a series of adventures to assuage the despair that followed the death of her first and only love. Her round of deceptions comes to an end only when she looks to motherhood as a compensation for not having found the true mate. All this points up a great moral lesson: the flesh is in a sorry state, not only when it is oppressed under puritanism, but also when it is sated apart from a total communion with the partner. Used as a way of becoming more quickly acquainted, sexuality turns out to be a deceptive approach. It gives an illusory sense of the intimacy of this acquaintance, much as would the familiar *tu* (thou) or the use of the first name between strangers.

After noting the admitted failures of the sexual facility as a mode of communication between human beings, the path is cleared to speak more positively of sexuality paired with the unique love.

Sexuality and the one love

We know how reticent was primitive Christianity with respect to sexual union. The practice of the "white marriage for the Lord's sake", referred to in I Corinthians 7, seems to have been frequent. The brother-sister relationship in Christ went beyond the particular husband-wife relationship. This

was in no way a meritorious asceticism, but a holding back from the too-exclusive attachments that would have "distracted" from the service of the one Lord. We should add that in those days marriages were not primarily based on love — this even in Christian circles and despite Ephesians 5 — but on the family. This state of things continued for centuries in Christian civilization, while marriage was looked on as an institution of God, composed of duties and of tribulations. Then came the great modern separation of marriage from the Church, which paradoxically posed more sharply than ever before the grave question of where love fitted in. An excellent contemporary historian, Lucien Febre, could write: "I should not like to seem to be indulging in a somewhat crude paradox, but I feel free to say that in a way it was civil marriage, the lay and bourgeois institution of marriage, which brought together in our minds and finally welded the two notions of virtue and of marriage."¹ In fact, it was during the nineteenth century that the conflicts between fidelity and sincerity, marriage and love, were brought out into the light of day. The previous Western generations, although living all their lives under ecclesiastical law, seem to have worked out a fair number of convenient compromises.

The revolt, the publicity and the importance of sexuality thus all reached their great development precisely at the time when marriage was becoming ideally consecrated not only as the support of the family but also as that of virtue and love. Inevitably, a thousand dramas and a thousand questions developed. If physical accord is so important, should we not have pre-marital experiences to give marriages a better chance? If someone is not married, can he be morally excluded from the field of knowledge that sex constitutes? And if the latter cannot be separated from love, what happens to love when the physical attraction drops away? Since nowadays we know well that the expression "deceive one's wife" should not be merely limited to the physical domain, of what worth is it to deny ourselves here an infidelity which we allow ourselves in other forms, or rather, why is it not better to break off an apparent

¹ *Autour de l'Heptaméron*, Gallimard, 1944, p. 291.

physical congeniality than to prolong a psychological breach that has already taken place? Finally, will man's love be as frequently bestowed as are his physical desires, and are his official remarriages to be equally frequent, on the score that this is preferable to a series of illicit unions hidden behind the false front of a conventionally sustained marriage?

These are some of the numerous and difficult questions thrust forward by the frankness of today's attitudes. Law-making bodies, as in the U.S.S.R., which have tried to solve them have abruptly shifted from unbridled divorce to the strictest of family codes. How can we discuss all this if we remain only within our domain of sex? First, I feel that sex, no longer being a forbidden fruit, has lost a great deal of its mysterious attraction. All the promise that men and women thought they could expect from it has not materialized. It becomes an integral part of amorous science without in any way being the climax or keystone thereof¹. That is why Christian circles should, to the same degree, cease to call sexual lapses the only sins, ignoring social oppression, egocentrism, indifference and phariseism, which are far worse sins according to the Bible, and should refuse all intentional separation of sex and love. A sex relation carried on without the idea and intention of loving the one beloved is an illusory knowledge which rarely develops that which it lacked at its inception. Thus, instead of facilitating a marriage, there is no denying that a pre-marital union threatens it².

On the other hand, I would be much more hesitant to treat the question of the unique love when this arises outside of an ill-conceived marriage. Karl Barth speaks at length in his *Dogmatik* of marriages which we are forced to recognize, with profound distress rather than aloof detachment, as not having been blessed by heaven. Such marriages existed quite

¹ We give a wrench to the Hebrew word when we say that Adam and Eve "knew" each other basically by the sex act (Gen. 4 : 1), which would let us suppose that before the fall, when it is not said they knew each other in this way, they remained strangers.

² I looked in vain through the 842 pages of the Kinsey report on *The Sexual Behavior of Women* for a tabulation that might indicate that marriages sexually tried out beforehand were more stable than the others.

as much in the past as now, but today they are more acknowledged, more visible, now that we expect more of marriage as a total communion than previous centuries did. The question goes beyond the limits of our subject. Let us say, however, that sexual maladjustment is rarely the profound cause here, and sexual accord rarely the simple cure. Measured by the other obstacles which little by little intrude themselves between two human beings, sex is merely the most intimate and generally the most hidden from the outside world. Clearly, it is always preferable for two people to face the problem of hostility between themselves rather than with third parties. Sexual life here plays a modest but immediate role, giving warning of a separation while there is still time to avoid it, or aiding to maintain a last link. It is the mirror of the psychological life, not a master directing it but a servant we should learn to heed and put to use.

The body and its sexual instinct correspond to the soul and its attitude towards others. The body should help men and women to come closer together, to understand and love one another. Our age already knows that sexuality is not something to be suppressed nor something to be suffered. But we are also beginning to recognize that the goal of sexual life, far from being self-affirmation or lengthy experimentation before choice, is an invitation to man and woman to learn how greatly they resemble each other in their complexity and how greatly their differences, once they are patiently comprehended, can multiply their shared joy.

Why Not Marry a Person Who Is Not a Christian ?¹

D. T. NILES

If you love that person ?

“Have ye not read, that he which made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said... the twain shall become one flesh ?” (Matt. 29 : 4-5).

The nature of marriage derives from the nature of God’s creation. So Jesus derived it in His teaching on marriage. “In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him ; male and female created he them ; and blessed them, and called their name Adam” (Gen. 5 : 1-2). God has made a bisexual world. He has made man “male and female”. This “male and female” man is made in the likeness of God. And this likeness, which constitutes the foundation of all man-woman relationships, also constitutes the foundation of the man-woman relationship in marriage.

Unfortunately the word “likeness” is an ambiguous word. It may mean the likeness of a replica, as, for example, the stamped image on a coin. Or it may mean the likeness of a reflection, as, for example, a person’s reflected image in a mirror. The stamped image belongs to the coin. It can be defaced but not altogether destroyed. The reflected image, however, does not belong to the mirror. It exists only in relation. The likeness to God in which man has been made is this likeness in relation. Mountains and rivers, birds and flowers are not made in God’s image. They are simply His handiwork. But man is more than an artifact. He is man in relation to God.

The dog-ness of the dog is in the dog. But the man-ness of the man is not in the man. Man is dependent creation.

¹ Originally published in pamphlet form by the Y.M.C.A.s of India and Ceylon under the title, *Why not Mixed Marriages ?*

His man-ness consists in his relation to God, a relation which it is not in man's power to abrogate or escape.

Whither shall I go from thy Spirit ?
 Or whither shall I flee from thy presence ?
 If I ascend to heaven, thou art there !
 If I make my bed in Sheol, thou art there !
 If I take the wings of the morning
 and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
 even there thy hand shall lead me,
 and thy right hand shall hold me.
 For thou didst form my inward parts,
 thou didst knit me together in my mother's womb.
 (Ps. 139 : 7-10, 13.)

Man is never far from God's question, "Adam, where art thou ?", and because of this address of God under which he stands, man remains man.

But it is precisely this address which is involved also in the man-woman relation : for, in the world that God has made, man and woman are made beside each other and for each other and over against each other, and God addresses both of them together, so that the conversation between man and woman is always in the context of the conversation between man, woman and God. In the marriage relation, this conversation takes on its most direct and most poignant form. Man and wife still remain two persons, each under God's direct address, but they also become "one flesh" — the two of them together in their earthly life bound by God's common address to them. They are joined together by God.

An unanswered question

What is the content of God's address to man, and what is the nature of man's response to His address which God requires ? The answer to both these questions is, "Jesus Christ". Jesus is both God's question and man's answer to that question. In Jesus, man answers, "I am here — in Christ". But both question and answer are subjected to distorting tension when a man and his wife cannot hear the question or give the answer together. For, once married, God addresses them together, and

a Christian with a partner who is of another faith is unable to give the obedient answer. It is tragic when a home has to face the constant pressure of an unanswered question that will not be stilled.

In the teaching of Jesus, not only is the nature of marriage derived from the nature of God's creation, but also the meaning and obligations of marriage are illumined by His reference to Himself as the bridegroom. St. Paul takes this aspect of the teaching of Jesus and amplifies it in his letter to the Ephesians:

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes it and cherishes it, as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. (Eph. 5 : 25, 28-30.)

The Christian marriage relation subsists within the Church, and each Christian home draws its life from the life of the Church. This life is the life of the Church's Bridegroom who loved His Bride and gave His life for Her, so that it is Christ's love for the Church which courses through every Christian family, making possible Christian love between husband and wife, and between parents and children. God is the Father whose name and nature every family shares (Eph. 3 : 15), and whose love in Jesus makes family love possible. "Even as I have loved you" (John 15 : 12) — that is the definition of Christian love, and it is impossible except as it derives from Him. This means, for example, that my love for my wife is part of, and must be consonant with, Christ's love for her, and that it is also part of my response to Christ's love for me.

The home, a means of grace

In the Garden of Eden story, the first action of God after Adam and Eve had sinned was to find them and restore them to each other. In their mutual relation, and in the responsibilities which they had to carry, both separately and together, would be the beginning of their salvation. It was in the close-knit life of man and wife with its total demands that they

learned the discipline of love, of loving and being loved, until through that discipline they learned the nature of love itself — that love of God for them which was the source and strength of their love for one another. The home is part of God's provision for man's salvation.

How often one is told by a Christian man or woman who desires to marry a person of another faith that he or she will not forsake Christianity. It is, indeed, a matter of deep thankfulness that so many Christians among those who have married persons of other faiths have retained their fellowship with the Church and, in quite a number of cases, even maintained the glow of the Christian life. But, nevertheless, it is a tragedy when the life of the home, which is intended to feed on and to feed into the life of the Church, is deprived of this privilege and possibility. Whatever a Christian is able to do, or refrain from doing, as a result of marrying a person of another faith, such a Christian has done one thing, and that is to forego and betray his or her right and responsibility to build a Christian home.

There are not merely Christian individuals; there is also such a thing as a Christian home.

1. When two Christians desire to marry each other, they come to the Church to make them man and wife. That is the right thing to do, for both of them belong to Jesus Christ in the Church by their baptism, and it is the Church that can legitimately give them to each other. A service of Christian marriage is a service within the life of the Church.

2. When, in the marriage service, each says to the other, "I take thee", each is taking someone who by faith in Jesus Christ belongs to God, and who will always so belong to Him, so that what is taken is a gift of grace, for that is what God's gifts always are. In marriage is found a new experience of the graciousness of God.

3. A home which is the result of a Christian marriage is a Christian home. It is controlled by the fact that every member of it belongs to God in Jesus Christ, and that it is under this relation that all the other relationships both within and outside the home exist. Especially should it be remembered that the

children of Christian parents are children for Jesus Christ in the life of the Church, and should be brought up in His faith and fear.

4. The function of a Christian home in the life of the community is to bear its witness to the meaning of the Lordship of Christ over all life. It is the primary social unit in which must be evidenced the truth that the Lordship of Jesus is a lordship over life in the total complexity of all life's relationships, and not just a lordship over individuals in the narrow abstraction of their individuality.

If then a Christian should forego and betray his or her right and responsibility to build a Christian home, such action clearly involves a denial of who and what Jesus Christ is. But the question is often asked whether there is any Christian home in which this denial is not made in some measure. It may be that there is no ideal Christian home, but much is gained where at least a home is committed to full obedience to Jesus Christ and has avoided a formal denial of such commitment. Even if either or both parties to a Christian marriage are nominal Christians only, that their home is set up within the fellowship and life of the Church is an immediate safeguard both for them and for their children. (The implications of Christian marriage must always be explained to the persons concerned before their marriage is solemnized.)

Where only one partner is Christian

Let me, at this point, interject a word out of my personal knowledge of, friendship with, and pastoral care for, some homes where only one of the partners was a Christian. I am speaking now of people for whom Christianity meant something, people who knew and believed, in whatever vague form, that Jesus was their Lord. Such people I found often began their married life without too much distress of mind, because they were not aware of the strength with which Jesus held them; but as time passed, and as they discovered that they had to pull against the hold of Jesus on them — like a dog straining

at its leash — in order to build a “neutral home”, their inner distress kept on increasing constantly, until they knew real sorrow when children arrived and they found it impossible to bring those children openly to Jesus Christ and train them for His companionship.

Let me give an example of what I mean by the hold of Jesus. A Hindu lawyer once came to a Methodist minister and said, “Sir, I have a difficult request to make. My wife has just died but, before she died, she took my hand and made me promise that I would fulfil her dying wish. When I asked her what she wanted me to do, her answer was: ‘Even though I have been the mother of a Hindu home, in my own heart I have loved and worshipped Jesus Christ. When I was a girl at school I gave my heart to Jesus. I could not openly seek baptism then because my parents would not have given their consent, but at least in my death I want to witness to Jesus Christ. I want you to arrange that I receive a Christian burial.’ Sir, will you come and give a Christian burial to my wife?” It is wise that a person of another faith who marries a Christian should know that he or she is taking a partner for life in whose soul there will be a growing sorrow, however hidden that sorrow might be kept.

Why not marry a person of another faith? That is the question which we are seeking to answer, and, in terms of our discussion so far, that answer surely has to be that to marry a person of another faith involves such a disloyalty to Jesus, such a deprivation of Christian privilege, and such a denial of Christian responsibility as to make such a marriage completely undesirable. But if a mixed marriage ever becomes unavoidable, it is essential to remember that where a Christian marries a “neutral” adherent of another faith, the problems of such a marriage are more bearable than where the marriage is with a “believer” member of another faith. It is, for instance, pure tragedy if a believing Christian marries a believing Hindu. As for a nominal Christian marrying a nominal Hindu, there is little on which to base any argument. They may just as well toss for it.

When mixed marriage is unavoidable

But under what conditions is it thought that the kind of mixed marriage about which we have been speaking becomes unavoidable? We must answer this question in terms of the situation of the Church in India and Ceylon. There are those who seek mixed marriage because they say there are no suitable Christian partners available within their caste or community. There are areas where the standard of culture and education of Christian girls is higher than that of Christian boys, because the Church in those areas has been lop-sided in its educational work, so that Christian girls seek marriage with those of other faiths who are of comparable cultural attainments. There are those individuals, particularly girls, who are converts to Christianity, but none of whose relations are Christians, and for whom, therefore, it is difficult to get Christian marriages under a system in which marriage is not merely between individuals but between families.

In each one of these situations the challenge to the Church is that it deal with the basic reasons which give rise to them, and that at the same time it deal pastorally with every case as it arises. The important thing is that the Church should not think that it has fulfilled its function when it has maintained its attitude of disapproval to mixed marriages. Under all circumstances this attitude of disapproval must be maintained, but in certain circumstances the Church must, in addition, deal with these problems as problems belonging to an emerging and growing community in a largely non-Christian environment.

Faced with the problem of one member of a pagan family becoming converted to Christianity, while the other still remained pagan, Paul wrote, "The unbelieving husband is consecrated through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is consecrated through her husband. But if the unbelieving partner desires to separate, let it be so. Wife, how do you know whether you will save your husband? Husband, how do you know whether you will save your wife?" (I Cor. 7: 14-16). What a good example we have here of the combination of practical wisdom and theological truth!

When the Roman Catholic Church seeks a promise that the children of a mixed marriage in which a Roman Catholic is involved will be brought up as Roman Catholic, or when the early American missionaries in Ceylon themselves, under certain circumstances, arranged suitable mixed marriages for their converts, with the promise that the children of such marriages would be brought up as Christians — in both cases we have examples of an attitude of real and practical concern. It is also a matter of deep thankfulness that, at least as far as the Roman Catholic Church is concerned, an unmarried woman need not be a liability either to herself or to the Christian community. The church provides many avenues of celibate service. Protestant churches need badly to learn to do the same.

But, all this having been said, nothing should be said in extenuation of those mixed marriages whose primary reason is the possibility of fantastic dowries or increase of political and social influence, or a higher economic standard of life, or the maintenance of caste purity. It is not merely Judas who is guilty of betraying Jesus for thirty pieces of silver.

Is mutual consent sufficient ?

But, what if you love that person ? Surely, it is sheer nonsense to put the question in this form. A Christian has no right to keep his or her mind open to the possibility of falling in love with a person of another faith. To keep one's mind open in this way is already to have denied the ownership of Jesus Christ. "But what can we do ?" people ask. "We have fallen in love and we could not help it." That is a statement which it is both dangerous and impossible to accept. I am a married man which means, among other things, that my mind is closed to the possibility of falling in love with another woman. If my mind were not so closed, or could not be so closed, I should be a dangerous man to let loose in society.

The criticism can be made, as was made by a friend who read the first draft of this essay in manuscript, that its argument is purely intellectual, and does not take sufficient account of the personal and emotional elements involved in this problem.

Is it not true that "falling in love" is an experience which seems to happen without one being aware of it? And is it not more true that there is not that maturity in Christian discipleship when one is young in years, during which time it is that one falls in love? It seems to me that only one answer is possible to these criticisms and questions, the answer that discipleship to Jesus inevitably demands the control of one's emotional life by consciously held allegiance to Christian truth and principle, and that the urgency of the task must be faced of helping Christian young people to love Jesus Christ, for only such love can close the mind against other love which is a betrayal of it.

"I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt have none other gods before me" (Ex. 20: 2-3).

"The Lord our God, the Lord is one; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength" (Mark 12: 29-30).

The Changing Social and Family System in Japan

KENNETH K. MORIOKA

Japan has experienced terrific changes in the various aspects of her political, economic, social and cultural life in the ten years since the end of the last war. During the first half of these ten years, quite radical reforms were carried out under orders of the occupation forces, and many of us thought the old Japan was being entirely reshaped. However, the outbreak of the Korean war in June, 1950, brought the era of "backpedaling", seen, for instance, in the birth of the new Police Reserve Force in July, 1950¹, and in the promulgation of the Subversive Activities Prevention Law in July, 1952². This retreat has checked the current of democratization in Japanese society, and at the same time, the reaffirmation of various social traditions, which has come as a reaction to the blind worship of American civilization, has produced what might be called a "restorative" trend in our society.

The democratic spirit was the most enthusiastically supported guiding idea in Japanese society immediately after the war, as can be seen by the granting of freedom to criticize the emperor system, of woman suffrage, and the passing of the Labour Union Act, which for the first time gave labourers the right to strike, the new constitution which affirms the sovereignty of the people, the Fundamental Education Law which establishes coeducation, and the Revised Civil Law whose very principle is respect for the individual and equality of the sexes. However, these reforms were carried out on the basis of the power and influence of the occupation forces; it is natural that with the change in occupation policy and in international relations the Japanese themselves should come to re-examine them. While an effort of readjustment is involved in this reversal, there is a great danger that the spirit of democracy will be smothered by some reactionaries. Generally speaking, whenever a legislative

¹ The second article of the constitution renounces the use of armed force, and consequently prohibits any kind of rearmament.

² This law aims to repress associations with subversive activities, especially the communists, rather than rightist groups. In Japan, where the living standard of workers is relatively low, those who are interested in the welfare of the weak and the poor tend to sympathize with some left-wing movements, though they themselves are not communists. There is a danger that these people will also be repressed by this law.

reform is too radical, it is enforced quite differently than had been originally foreseen, due to the great gap between the idea of the law and the reality of the situation, and reforms in post-war Japan are no exception. This has provided those who advocate "going back to the old Japan" with good arguments. Therefore, it would be safe to say that the great changes in Japanese society in the first five post-war years were superficial, and that the transformation at a deeper level has been very slow. I have no wish to underestimate the democratic tendency or its influence upon Japanese society, but it should be recognized that its effect upon the daily lives of the people and upon their way of thinking is surprisingly weak. This is clearly evident in one of the aspects of post-war Japanese society which has been least amenable to change, even in the midst of other remarkable changes — the family system.

The traditional family system

While generalization is rather dangerous in this area, it may be helpful to note the following characteristics of the Japanese family system throughout its long history ¹.

1. The traditional Japanese family consists not only of the present living members, but is the total group, called *Iye*, which includes ancestors and unborn descendants. The greatest virtue for the family members is to maintain the *Iye*.

2. The family life is governed by the patriarch. He administers the family fortune, regulates all work and production, and conducts the worship of the family god, who guides and protects the *Iye* and is worshipped by the *Iye* as a whole. According to the old civil code, the family fortune is registered in the name of the patriarch, but it is not his private fortune — it belongs to the *Iye*. However, the patriarch, through his authority to regulate the family productive activities based on the family fortune, rules all members of the family, until they begin an independent life. Through his supervision of its members within the family system, the patriarch represents the family in the community. Very seldom are individuals treated as persons, and rarely are they conscious of their own dignity. However, the patriarch cannot exercise his authority in any way he pleases, but he himself is controlled by the institutional demands of the family system.

3. The patriarchal couple and their prospective successors (*chokkei*) are given a higher social status than other members of

¹ Kizaemon Ariga, *The Family in Japan, Marriage in Family Living*.

the family (*bokei*) both within and outside the family system. The eldest son is usually given the privilege of succession, and brothers enjoy higher status than sisters, simply because they have greater possibilities of becoming patriarchs. The male offspring who is to succeed to the headship of the family lives with his parents, even after he has married, and is responsible not only for their care, but also for that of *bokei* members of the family. Therefore, it is common for couples of two generations to live together, partly for financial reasons, and partly because of the institutional demands of the family system. The *bokei* members remain under the control of the patriarch until they establish a branch family (*bunke*), create a new, independent household, or are absorbed by other families through marriage or adoption, etc.

4. The patriarch chooses one of his sons as his successor. If there is no son, he chooses a boy from a family of similar social status, taken into the family through adoption or marriage to one of his daughters. The wife of a patriarch or his successor is chosen from a family of equal social status. The greatest concern is to perpetuate the *Iye*, and the personal relationship between couples is considered of little significance. Therefore, marriage is not the concern of the individuals, but of the family itself, and of the group of relatives.

While this is the general structure of the traditional Japanese family, it does not mean that no other type existed in Japan until the end of the war. In the large cities, most labourers in modern industries had their own families, consisting only of a wife and children, and the same is true of those in professions in urban areas. New occupations, which grew out of the development of capitalist enterprise in modern Japan, have produced a situation which permits the maintenance of small families. These were, however, in the minority, and it is significant that both the old civil code and other social norms supported the traditional family system. The appearance of the small family scarcely constituted a reaction to the prevailing system, and on the whole these small families were linked in some ways to larger family groups. This is why we must not underestimate the role of the traditional family system, even in contemporary Japanese society, especially in the rural areas and small towns where economic activity is largely based upon the family estate.

A new family ethic

Those who accept the traditional concept of the family believe they should maintain and develop the *Iye*, even if it means sacri-

ficing their own life to some extent. This may be accepted as a matter of course by those for whom the *Iye* provides the only security in life, for in Japanese society today there is scarcely any other form of social security. But in accepting this system, they are unaware of the great sacrifice of individual happiness which is involved. The new civil code, based upon the new constitution, is epoch making at this point.

The revised code is based on a new family ethic which advocates respect for the individual and equality of the sexes. It has legally abolished the traditional family system, which was the basis of the old civil code, requiring instead the registration of each marriage, and, following the family pattern of the West, it suggests strongly that family life is based on mutual assistance and cooperation between husband and wife. The rights of the heir and the authority of the patriarch have been abolished, and while the old civil code prevented the distribution of the family estate among the children, the new code requires that it be equally shared among them. It is evident that this is based on a belief that it is much more important that each person be treated as an individual, with respect and with a desire to ensure his happiness, than that the *Iye* be maintained. Adultery is no longer considered as a crime, and the absurdity of punishing only the misconduct of wives has been done away with.

The effect of this revised civil code is most strikingly revealed in the activities of the Family Court, set up in 1948. Statistics show that while, for example, in 1945 court cases involving domestic affairs numbered less than 2,500, in 1950, 41,412 such cases were brought before the Family Court. This increase should not be interpreted as indicating an increase in family problems, but rather as arising from a variety of difficulties which could not previously be dealt with legally. According to the statistics, nearly one third are divorce cases, and those brought by women far exceed those instigated by men. This by no means indicates an eagerness on the part of women to seek divorce, but, on the contrary, that it is only through such an institution as the Family Court that women, faced with family crises, can make themselves heard.

Changed status of women

The effort to abolish a system of human relationships based on authoritarian control is related to the improvement in the general status of women and children in society. The Women's and Minors' Bureau has been established, and, together with the Y.W.C.A. and other women's organizations, has made a splendid contribution in this field. At the end of the war, woman suffrage was granted.

At the same time, the Labour Standards Law was passed to prohibit discrimination between men and women workers, and also to protect women from physical injury. Since April, 1947, through a system of co-education, girls have been given equal opportunities with boys for education from grade school through college. In 1951 the ratio of girl college students to boys was one to eight, a remarkable increase in comparison with the pre-war figures¹. Moreover, quite a few women are active members of the Diet, the prefectural and local congress, the national or regional public Safety Commission, the Board of Education, the Welfare Commission, while others are professors, lawyers, and so forth. This could hardly have been imagined in pre-war Japanese society.

To what extent have these legislative and social reforms been successful in raising the position of women in family life, and in realizing democratic human relations. Readers' contributions to the columns of papers and magazines indicate a splendid awakening among housewives, but we must remember that these represent only a minority, and that the majority still remain old-fashioned in their way of thinking and in their attitude and relationship to men. Although the revised Family Registration Law requires each couple to register, it cannot prevent two or more families living together and forming a single family group, with a patriarch arising out of the common family life. Even though the revised civil code emphasizes cooperation between husband and wife, it is not difficult to understand that those husbands who can find no other way of living than to participate in their fathers' work are more concerned about cooperation with them than with their wives. Although by the time they marry they may have come to consider their personal relationships in the light of new trends in post-war Japanese society, as long as they live with their parents and have very close ties with their relatives, they are compelled to select their mates from the point of view of the family rather than according to their own inclinations. Although there is woman suffrage, most women vote for the candidate favoured by the patriarch or husband, partly because they are still under patriarchal control, and partly because they are afforded no opportunity to consider the matter independently.

"In-law" problems

However, the woman's position in the family is not necessarily low, especially in families where wives must work with their husbands

¹ In 1955, there are almost 500,000 students in institutions of higher education.

to earn more income, as is the case with peasants and labourers, or where their cooperation is absolutely essential. The most serious problem, when the parents live with their married son, is the relation between the mother and the daughter-in-law. The latter's position is much lower than the former's. According to an analysis of the divorce cases heard in the Tokyo Family Court in 1948 and 1949, more than one-third were brought by wives who could not get along with their mothers-in-law. Often the parents, especially the mother, accuse the daughter-in-law of not conforming to family tradition (*kafu*). It is quite natural that time and patience are required if the daughter-in-law, coming from a family with its own customs and traditions, is to adjust herself to those of the new family group.

In the past women were trained to follow three precepts: to submit to their parents in childhood, their husbands in married life, and their children when they became old. Although the authority of these precepts has dimmed, girls are still brought up in this pattern in order that they may make an easy adjustment when they get married. On the other hand, post-war women's education has demonstrated a much freer way of life for women. The conflict between the mother-in-law, who grew up in the old ideas, and the daughter-in-law, who has been educated in the new understanding of human relations, is unavoidable, and the tremendous increase in divorce is partly due to this. In order to solve this problem, it is essential to establish a situation in which a young couple can be financially independent of their parents and need not live with them.

The future for democratic family life

While the Japanese family is undoubtedly moving towards a democratic way of life under the influence of the various reforms in post-war Japanese society, it cannot be denied that social and economic factors exist which prevent the realization of the ideas embodied in the new constitution and codes. However, in spite of the fact that there are regulations which do not conform to the reality of family life today, we are convinced that it is more desirable for us to strive to bring the situation up to the standards set by the civil code, rather than to re-revise the latter. It must be remembered that the reasons why the democratization of the Japanese family system has not proceeded more rapidly will be rightly understood only when it is considered in relation to the general trend of Japanese society.

The Christian Facing a Non-Christian World in West Africa

DAVIDSON and MARJORIE NICOL

The Christian student in West Africa today sometimes has a Christian background going back some three or four generations. Christianity was re-introduced into West Africa about two hundred years ago, but serious attempts at evangelizing were not made until the early nineteenth century. The major seat of Christian teaching under the English was in Sierra Leone, but very soon afterwards Nigeria, the Gold Coast and Gambia had flourishing missions.

With this background it will be apparent that the student who is not Moslem in West Africa today is either a practising Christian or nominally so, as other religions along the coast towns have almost altogether given way to Christianity or Islam among educated people. Islam flourishes in the northern regions of Nigeria and the Gold Coast and in the hinterland of Sierra Leone, and to some extent also in the coastal districts. The percentage of Moslem students in university colleges in British West Africa is, however, small, being something of the order of five per cent.

The British West African colonies are rapidly becoming part of the "Western" world, with up-to-date bookshops, cinemas and a broadcasting service as part of the daily life of the inhabitants. Education is much sought after as the key to better jobs, and everyone who can tries for a scholarship or some means of studying, in order to improve his educational level. Thus we find students of varying age groups, the majority, however, falling within the twenty to thirty age range, attending teacher training colleges, missionary training colleges, commercial and technical institutes and university colleges.

There is a much smaller percentage of women students than one would find in parallel institutions in Europe, because the education of women until very recent years had lagged behind. Secondary schools for girls were few and far between until about twenty years ago, but now there is taking place a rapid expansion in this field. The reason in the case of Christian families was largely economic, as education involved expense, and even where the cost of training was not borne by the family, it meant a loss, in that one

able-bodied member of the family became unproductive for several years. Thus, in the past it was only in the case of chiefs or wealthy men that children, especially female, could be allowed to attend institutions of higher learning.

Students in West Africa, at any of the institutions we have mentioned, find themselves face to face with many of the problems common to young people elsewhere, who are trying to fit their religious training at school and home into a daily pattern of life. They are probably living away from home, with a greater degree of freedom than hitherto, and away from the closed social or tribal group in which they spent their childhood, with its rigid but comforting pattern of behaviour and code of morality.

Let us examine some of the pressures which may be brought to bear on the student living miles away from home and unable to return to visit his or her parents more than once a year, if as often. It frequently happens that students are engaged, married, or promised in marriage from an early age, because early marriage is usual. Sexual experience also probably starts at an earlier age than usual.

From village to college

It may be helpful in our analysis if we take as an example a young Christian girl and follow her from her home in a small village to a larger university town. She has several brothers and sisters, some of whom are half-brothers and sisters, because her father is a chief in his town, with several wives. She has thus accepted polygamy from childhood. Her mother is the first wife and has more privileges than the others, but she is greatly attached to the other wives and may call them all "mother". She has been educated at a mission school and has been presented with the teaching of the Bible. She regards herself as a Christian, having been confirmed into the Church when she was eighteen. She has not taken part in any initiation ceremony, common at puberty in her home town, because she was away at school at the time. Now, at nineteen, she has obtained a place at the university college, and has elected to pursue a degree course there. She has never been very far away from home, because while at school she stayed with relatives under close supervision and went home most weekends and during her vacations. Now she must reside at a hall of residence for women students a long way off.

With anticipation and excitement she sets out on her new life. She has not been promised in marriage because her father is "enlight-

ened", but the chief of the neighbouring village has a son of about her own age with whom she has been friendly, and the possibility of their marriage pleases both families. Her father places a great premium on education, and as she is the first female of this family to be proceeding to a university, it is a great joy and a wonderful thing in the village. Some think she may even be possessed by some special power which makes it possible for her to be so clever.

At the university, many new ideas are presented to her daily ; the excitement of adolescence is added to by the new way of living. Sometimes she feels a bit confused. It is all rather overwhelming at first, but she gradually settles down. Dances take place almost every week and she attends most of these, as she loves dancing. The young men are very gallant and she is attractive. She has not been warned of the dangers of the exciting social life. She has no close relation nearby with whom to discuss things, and she misses the strict paternal supervision to which she has been accustomed. She is uncertain as to what her behaviour should be. She is intelligent, and may have read books about sex, so she thinks she knows, if necessary, how to avoid an unwanted pregnancy. What worries her is that she may be cheapening herself if she permits liberties. But she also does not want to appear prudish. Some of the others say to her, "Why be so silly ?" She has postponed marriage beyond the age normal in her home town, and she wonders whether she will find a suitable husband later. She will be older than the unmarried girls of her home town, and there may be no suitable husband around then. Should she decide to look for a husband among the male students at the college ? In a community which places great importance on marriage and children, and where unmarried women are unusual, this is a very real problem for every girl student. She is in a dilemma and her work suffers, and she is unable to make the most of the interesting first year at college.

Problems of men students

For a young man the position is parallel, or it may be worse, as poverty in the cities leads women to offer themselves as mistresses for little, and it is comparatively easy for him to have sexual experiences. Also, he is a "student from the university", and for this reason a respected person with considerable standing in the community, where so many are illiterate. He may have a wife who is not with him at college. Fidelity is made difficult because of the propinquity of polygamy. His father may have several wives, and if he is dead, his son may have inherited some of his widows. It is

very difficult for him to cherish the ideal of Christian monogamous marriage. Christianity is accepted, but, in the words of a distinguished anthropologist writing of another part of Africa, "Monogamy is regarded as simply a European custom and not in the least essential to Christianity."

It will be remembered that many of our students are older than those one finds in other countries, and, especially in the case of the men, are often married and have families. During their student days it often happens that the family must be separated, and this may be a cause of considerable strain. Separation in these cases means not only distance apart, but also growing apart in outlook and mentality. This may be a cause of marital disagreement later, or the man may find a more congenial companion near at hand. Another problem he may have to face is that caused by financial worry, as he may already have several dependents. In West Africa, most educated men of any standing are called upon to support some close or distant relatives, who may also expect their kinsman to educate their children. Financial worry is often a cause of great tension among students.

The ease with which sexual relations may be had makes it necessary for the average student to be of tough moral fibre, if he is not to weaken and give in to temptation. Strong resistance needs to be built up, and fortunately many students seem to be able to do this. In both sexes absence from the closely-knit family group causes a further breakdown in individual security, while the greater degree of freedom permits the possibility of behaviour which would not be possible in their own homes. Occasionally, a student may contract a venereal disease, which may be a great source of worry and guilt feelings. Unfortunately, concealment may render the cure difficult or long drawn out.

The Christian perspective

Where the Christian pattern of life is understood and accepted, it is unlikely that any compromise with polygamy, or a form of life so very different, can be satisfying. For this reason, tolerant acceptance of the older generation, with a firm decision to stick to Christian principles oneself and to lead a clean sexual life, would appear to be the only really satisfactory solution. With mind and body dedicated to God, sex assumes its rightful place as a great power to be kept for a special purpose. This power should be recognized as being capable of use equally for good or for ill. This would seem to be the Christian starting point in facing the problems at which we have been looking.

It may be asked whether one can expect old customs to disappear so easily, and superstitions with which one has been brought up to be discarded lightly. Of course it is not easy, and in a single individual it may be impossible to see the complete eradication of old customs and the complete acceptance of Christian marriage. But, in fact, many of these old customs have died out or have been distorted from their original meaning. The present generation is often very hazy as to the meaning behind some of these ceremonies, for example, the initiation ceremonies for young men and women at puberty. The influx of Western ideas rushes on, and there is among most educated young West Africans a great desire to live on the European pattern or a modified version of it. It is, therefore, possible to foresee a Christian society which accepts completely the Christian teaching, especially with regard to sexual behaviour and marriage. Much thought is usually given to such problems by students, who desire a reasonable basis for their behaviour.

There is room for practical talks to students about sexual behaviour. Most, if not all, West African students are aware of the mechanism of sex by the time they reach adolescence. But its accompanying control and its moral basis are not clear. The dangers of losing self-control in petting — an import from the West, and therefore attractive — need stressing. Homosexuality is mercifully rare, but its existence should be made known to young West Africans, its abnormality recognized, and resistance to seduction by superiors advised. It should be made clear to young men that acquiescence or consent by the female does not alter the wrongness of pre-marital or extra-marital intercourse. Although the stigma of illegitimacy is not very great, yet the young girl student should realize that she is delaying her own development and, in fact, that of the whole of West African womanhood by pre-marital adventures and pregnancy. People look up to a woman student as setting a standard for others to follow. Chastity is still a shining virtue and celibacy is not a fatal disease.

Some more study of Christian attitudes to sex and marriage might be very helpful, particularly at an early stage of the student's career. Difficulties could then be approached in the light of Christian teaching, and sympathetic advice given by those who should remember to apply the spirit of the law as well as the letter. Great patience, time and Christian charity will achieve miracles in helping students to resolve their personal problems, which are no fewer in West Africa than elsewhere.

Latin American Youth Facing Sexual Problems

HERMAN C. KRUSE

The traditional attitude

Anyone writing on this subject a few years ago would have had to admit that a double standard of morality was generally accepted as the basis of sexual life in Latin America, even by the Catholic Church. This double standard was applied both to the behaviour of man and woman and to the behaviour of rich and poor. Also implied was the taboo imposed on the public discussion of any problem related to sex, the rejection by society of the unmarried mother, and of the woman who was believed to have sinned, the exaggerated paternal surveillance over the relations of an engaged couple, and the celebrated "donjuanism" which is nothing else than masculine irresponsibility with regard to the woman and the consequences of sexual relations.

Although in certain circles this is still the predominant attitude, a profound transformation has taken place, which has put the sexes on an equal level, and which has brought the sexual problem into the limelight of public opinion. The motivating forces behind this transformation have been the new attitudes of youth, formed by the cinema, novels, and educational trends which have made sex a subject for study, and the echoes of the moral disorder produced in Europe by the war and the post-war period.

Modern times

We can, therefore, assert that we have in our day the beginning of a new era, in which the sexual problem appears in its true dimensions, stripped of all social and ideological prejudices, which up until ten or fifteen years ago had relegated it to the category of the proscribed.

This new attitude has produced certain circumstances and problems which we shall try to analyze in this article. First, at the present time the dominant note in relations between the sexes is naturalness. This is not only because the spell of the taboo is broken

and the discussion of the problem is open to all, but also because we are reaching a state of equality between the sexes, in which the woman is no longer everlastingly repressed and forever consenting to man. As an example, we could cite the many mixed groups in which the various aspects of sex are discussed seriously and with the same interest and dignity as are philosophy, art and political questions. We might mention also the end of the all-too-formal engagement, during which the young couple could see each other only at prearranged times, and always in the presence of the mother or the little brother. There has also been an end of marriages of convenience, in which what other people or the family would say was more important than the mutual love of the partners. And there is also a new attitude, both in society and before the law, towards the unmarried mother.

We are under no illusion, however, that everything is wonderful. New problems arise in connection with each new solution, many of them equally as serious, or more so, than those just solved.

The other side of the medal

The first negative aspect we shall mention is not typical of the new situation, but is one of the factors which helped to produce it: the great amount of pornography. We have cited the cinema and novels as factors which promote cultural growth and which have helped to create the new situation. Yet they often do not contribute to the development of culture, but, together with the press and propaganda, only serve to deform the popular mind to the advantage of powerful economic or "spotless" political interests. Pornography is no longer a means, but an end in itself. Sex loses its dignity, and what is natural and beautiful becomes unhealthy, morbid and base. It is not strange that, in this atmosphere of artificially-aroused eroticism, many young people enter into sex relations through mere curiosity.

It is natural that such a situation, combined with powerful economic interests, which are often allied with high-ranking political figures, should result inevitably in widespread prostitution. The legal regulations differ from country to country; where a system of abolition is enforced, there is, of course, a minimum of temptation, but the fact is that in the whole of Latin America the ministries of public health control thousands of prostitutes, who are exploited by large trusts of "respectable" bullies, in order that the masses may satisfy their basest needs without reaping any economic benefit from their traffic.

Another aspect of this basically false conception of sexual life is the appearance of an onanist mentality in many young people. The sex act creates ties and has repercussions on the whole life of those who participate in it: according to the Bible "they shall be one flesh". When sexual activity is entered into through curiosity, through a purchase-sale arrangement, or for "reasons of health", "the sex act is no longer a sin and becomes a trifle like cigarettes or alcohol"¹. There is no mutual affection, no dialogue; sexual life is no longer a drama but becomes a monologue. Leaving aside the question of masturbation, it is still true that for many the sex act is such a solitary and intimate expression of their ego, that "it transforms coition into a sort of onanism"². The woman — or the man — is no longer the partner, but becomes a thing, a means by which to secure personal satisfaction. In this connection, an Uruguayan writer, Servando Cuadro, has said: "Modern man is single, even if biologically he is a father and legally a husband."

Certain other evils have also been the fruit of the new situation of naturalness in the relations between the sexes. It is very difficult to break away at one fell swoop from conditions rooted in a very distant past, without some people being shattered in the attempt to adapt themselves to the new situation — if they attempt it at all, for there are many who do not even make the effort. One of the dangers of the equal and natural treatment of the sexes is that of falling into incivility. It cannot be denied that the famous Latin chivalry has declined in recent years. And it is not only the fact that seats in a tram are no longer offered to a lady, or that serenades are no longer sung beneath the window of the beloved; it is the much more basic fact that in the process of achieving equality between the sexes, the fundamental difference between man and woman has been forgotten. While we may treat our student girl, friend, our neighbour or our wife as an equal, we should always remain conscious of the fact that she is a lady and we are gentlemen. Unfortunately much of this attitude is being lost. The change in the *piropo* is the clearest indication of this process of retrogression. The *piropo* was the gallant phrase, the polite compliment, the delicate turn of phrase; today it has become the bill of fare of a cheap restaurant: *churro*, *budin*, *papa* and *churrasca* are currently accepted expressions, which not only are not regarded as insults, but which are even welcomed.

¹ ROBERTO ARES PONS, "Aproximaciones a la problematica de nuestra juventud", in *Problemas de la Juventud Uruguaya*, Ed. Marcha, Montevideo, 1954, pp. 58-59.

² *Ibid.*

"Male and female created he them"

We have sketched here a panorama, indicating its virtues and some of its defects, and we now must ask ourselves : what part have the churches played in all this ? It is probably no exaggeration to say that both the Protestant churches and the Catholic Church have played an active and positive role in the process. Sex education has been given from the pulpit, and especially in the various groups of religious organizations, in such a way as to implant concepts which are at the same time realistic and pure, about what sex is and what it means as a gift of God. The Evangelical schools have disregarded the criticisms of their co-educational system and have triumphed. An idea of the sanctity of marriage and parenthood has been given to young people of both sexes. At a time when non-religious youth are complaining that "modern society has not been capable of elaborating a new concept of human relations which effectively avoids these dangers"¹, the Christian churches are preaching this concept, as it is found in the words of Genesis 1 : 27 : "In the image of God created he him ; male and female created he them" ; in the words of Paul : "Let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit" (II Cor. 7 : 1), and in the words of Christ : "But I say to you that every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matt. 5 : 28).

¹ *Ibid.*

The Sexual Problems of Overseas Students

WILLIAM CATTERNACH

This article is written on the sole basis of pastoral experience among a large group of overseas students in Edinburgh where the writer was chaplain to overseas students from 1950-53. It will be concerned primarily with the sexual problems of the Asian and African contingents, and especially with the problems of the African students in Britain. At the time of writing the African contingent is about the largest undergraduate group of overseas students. Many of them come to study here for five to seven years, sometimes longer, and many of them do not return home during this lengthy period.

This means that there are thousands of young people from Africa in our universities between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five, the most naturally virile age. This fact provides the basic problem, for they are anxious to find a natural outlet for their life. Many other people — soldiers, emigrants, travellers from this and other countries — have had to face the same problem, but they have usually managed to find easy means of social mixing with nationals of both sexes. This question of social mixing is made difficult and complicated for overseas students because of racial and cultural differences; nowhere are these questions felt more keenly than in the question of the relation between the sexes and especially in miscegenation. This fact is keenly realized by all concerned.

A further complication is that many Asian and African students come from a settled society, and have to adjust themselves to an uprooted social life in the West, where the sexual motive is ruthlessly exploited in advertisement, novel and magazine.

Miscegenation

The UNESCO studies on racial relations have made it clear that there is no biological objection to miscegenation. Nor are there any biblical grounds for its rejection. Nevertheless, there are purely social factors, however deplorable, which have to be recognized — prejudice, custom, environment — which often make it very difficult to achieve a happy mixed racial marriage and which raise acute difficulties for children. These facts are realized by all

concerned, and this being the case, fear, attraction and news value surround all friendships between students of different race and sex.

Does every black man want a white woman ?

This is a common, though unspoken, British assumption, and it is deeply resented by overseas students as further evidence of white arrogance. Many students have said that they were warned before going overseas not to bring back a white wife, and many are quite clear that, while they enjoy their friendship, they prefer to marry a woman of their own race. Nevertheless, because of the social domination of the white race, some overseas students do seem to want white partners, for reasons of social standing, and sometimes because they have a deep desire to protest against claims to racial superiority, and the most potent protest is to have a white partner.

The reverse side of this problem is that a fairly sizable group of white women, who have a sense of guilt about racial prejudice, often seem particularly anxious to befriend overseas students. Frequently this is done with dignity and a high standard of personal behaviour on both sides. There are, however, some women who are a menace, negrophiles who seem to be working off guilt by throwing themselves in a quite unhelpful way at Africans or Asians, often causing them embarrassment and trouble, or arousing cynical amusement, and sometimes provoking real personal tragedies.

Women students from overseas form a much smaller group, and are normally here for a less lengthy period. They are sometimes caused acute unhappiness because they receive so little attention in the foreign setting from their brother nationals.

What can be done to help ?

1. The greatest help will come through the further advance of Makerere College, the University of Nigeria at Ibadan, the University College of the Gold Coast, etc., so it is no longer necessary for undergraduates to go into temporary exile for five to seven years. The problem becomes much less acute when students are away for much shorter periods to do post-graduate work.

2. In the meantime, it is urgent that high priority be given to assisting wives of overseas students, exiled for a long period, to accompany their husbands. This is difficult financially, and in terms of finding them suitable accommodation, but it is vital.

3. Students should, if possible, be assisted to return home for a whole summer vacation in the middle of a long course.

4. The social mixing of British and overseas students is greatly to be desired, though this requires a high standard of conduct and responsibility among all concerned. It requires that overseas students deal firmly and frankly with negrophiles on appropriate occasions.

5. Men students from overseas should be careful that women from their own countries receive courteous and considerate attention.

6. It requires the clear understanding that where problems exist they are problems for both sides — that there is no question of one race with unworthy motives.

7. British people should refrain from making judgments on mixed marriages, but should offer the people involved their support and friendship.

The African Negro Student and the Sex Problem

FRANÇOIS CASALIS

Even though we have chosen to limit ourselves to a few remarks dealing only with North African and Malagasy students studying in France, we still find it no simple matter to launch into our subject, for especially in this field where exceptions abound, generalizations must be handled with great delicacy.

With this firmly in mind, let us turn first to consider and explain a fact that has been widely observed : that a citizen of the French African Territories, landing in France, seems straightway to be impelled to possess a white woman. Hitherto he has been told repeatedly that he is an inferior being, with no history, no culture, no civilization ; too often in his own land has he seen the white take black mistresses, the clear sign of their authority ; too deeply has it been borne in upon him that a black cannot touch a white woman without committing a sacrilege against the superior race, for him not now to desire to affirm his equality concretely, to try out his new liberty by taking a French woman. Whether this could be a reaction due to his inferiority complex, I would have no way of determining, but it would seem too simplified an explanation to be wholly true.

The problem of marriage

But the perspective of marriage poses still more serious problems for them. Nearly all wish to contract a marriage in the (current) European fashion, and some wish to do so because of their Christian faith. These young men seek a companion to share, in reciprocal love, their thoughts, their worries or their joys, to join on an equal footing in creating a home life. But the gap between the education of these boys and that of the girls they left behind is enormous. In French West Africa, only a very small percentage of girls, even now, is given schooling. And still fewer are the girl students who come to France to continue their studies. The African girl who could be both companion and mate, and of whom they all dream, exists in fact for only a few of them. They are, therefore, forced

to choose between two solutions equally false: either to marry a completely untutored African girl, a dish-washing machine (as we in the West would say), or for child-bearing, and thus to betray their conception of marriage; or to marry a French girl, which they feel is somehow a betrayal of their own people. Indeed, what French girl would consent to be assimilated into the African family, and, even more, in the coming conflict, to take sides with the blacks against France? I have seen Christian African students hotly defend, before their compatriots, the theoretical possibility of marrying a white girl, as a defiance of racism, but they were also quite well aware how improbable it would be that such a girl could bear up under the circumstances imposed on her without betraying her husband.

To resolve this difficulty, some among them choose, in Africa, the girl who is to become their wife, and have her come to France during the last year or so of their studies. But this presupposes either generous financial means, or the high political backing needed to obtain a scholarship for the girl in question. Thus marriage presents a grave difficulty for most of these young people — for most of them, we should make it clear, since we know quite a few such student couples who are perfectly happy.

And so the difference in level, this gap in the matter of education between the chiefly masculine *élite* and the great mass of African girls, has its repercussions even in the field of marriage. But the basic problem that the Gospel poses to African students when it comes to sex relations is another matter.

Three contradictory poles

For the greater part of those I have met, even for the faithful church members who strive to live with Jesus Christ, sex life and marriage are two utterly unconnected realities. On the one hand there are sex relations, a biological need, something to be satisfied like hunger and thirst. The sexual act involves nothing more for them than the body. And on the other hand, at a completely different level, there is marriage, the community that should be sought with a woman. The words of Christ or of St. Paul on a more than bodily union, a union of the whole being, a definitive unity created by sex relations, are not understood by them. Just as our civilization, our culture, distort our understanding of the Gospel and force us into unconscious compromises, so too the dogmas of traditional African philosophy balk them at this very point. True, they condemn adultery, since the deceived husband is thereby injured,

but it is useless to speak to them of abstinence before marriage, as that has no foundation in their thinking. And here we find also one of the points underlying their endless discussions on polygamy.

Looked at from another point of view, the Malagasy conception of marriage creates difficulties for students, this time particularly for the girls. In the Malagasy tradition, marriage exists for the child, who will assure the continuance of the family. It is, therefore, standard procedure that the young men and girls live together for a time. If, then, a child is expected, they marry; if not, they separate. On the other hand, the male Malagasy students have learned, in some of our French circles, to seek jealously to preserve until marriage the virginity of the girls who may perhaps become their wives. And as, consequently, they turn to French girls for their casual sex relations, the Malagasy girls languish in despair. In a discussion of this question with one of the most intelligent and consecrated of the Malagasy pastors, he argued that the young men should revert to the healthier conceptions and fall in line with the customs, even if they were not very evangelical.

In the above two cases, it would seem that the conflict is between custom and the Gospel. In reality they are pulled three ways; in them there are three often contradictory poles of attraction: the traditional African or Malagasy culture, the current French notions of life, and the Gospel.

Preoccupation with politics

Though I recall, as best I can, all my talks and studies with African students, I find no other important difference in the sexual domain between the overseas students and the French or the Western foreigners. Profound reflections on "love" in all its forms require time, to say nothing of a certain tranquillity of mind. This is by no means the situation in which African or Malagasy students find themselves, engaged as they are, body and soul, in the struggle of their people for political independence. That is their primary preoccupation, and one which colours all their life. The immediate and vital struggle is that of the Christian churches, to remain at one and the same time rooted in the lives of their people and faithful to Jesus Christ.